

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	Fernando Arbeláez
Project title	Community-based conservation program of river turtles by indigenous Peruvian and Colombian communities of the Amazon River
RSG reference	06.03.09
Reporting period	July 2009 – Jan 2011
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	ferarbe@gmail.com ; info@fundacionbiodiversa.org
Date of this report	January 31, 2011

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
To protect a community conservation beach to reduce nest poaching and female predation.			X	Presence of a conspicuous group of local monitors in the conservation beach avoided all nesting females and nests from being extracted by night visitors. Nest extraction occurred only during daytime, incidentally, and was reduced from 49% in 2008 to 15% in 2009. No nesting female was hunted on the conservation beach.
To carry out environmental education activities in two Peruvian communities to raise awareness and seek for their involvement in the program.		X		The environmental education activities in the two Peruvian communities had a very positive impact (see an outcome below). However, we expected that each community would form its own local conservation group and get involved in the program, but this only occurred with one of the two. We still hope that the other community, even if it is not participating directly, will continue supporting the program by reducing their female hunting and nest poaching and respecting the agreement of the conservation beach.
To raise awareness among neighbour communities of the area about the importance of turtle conservation for future generations.			X	Three particular facts indicated the achievement of this objective: 1. Most neighbour communities expressed their support to the activities of the conservation groups and participated in different events of the program. 2. During the whole 2009 nesting season, the monitors were the only night visitors on the conservation beach, which shows that neighbour communities understood the importance of their activities. 3. A young people's group from one of the initially most reluctant communities approached us with the interest of forming a local conservation group in their community and participating in the conservation activities.
To get higher involvement and support to the conservation activities of the local groups by		X		A special turtle conservation event was organised between participating communities and environmental authorities from Colombia and Peru. Peruvian authorities participated in the planning but could not attend to the event, which took place in the Santa Sofia Reserve. Due to

Colombian and Peruvian environmental authorities				logistic problems, Peruvian communities also missed the event. However, five environmental authorities from Colombia carried out different awareness-raising activities and five communities participated in the event. Local conservation groups presented their work and their results, and received symbolic support from the authorities. This experience will allow us to better plan a future event where the guests will be the Peruvian communities and authorities.
To build capacity of local conservation groups to help empowering local communities as key actors in conservation of their natural resources.			X	44 trainees belonging to five local conservation groups (three experienced and two new) from three Colombian and one Peruvian indigenous communities participated in the 1 week capacity-building workshop. Three professional trainers addressed different topics such as turtle conservation and biology, monitoring techniques, data gathering and analysis, sustainable community development, conservation agreements, organisation capacity and designing projects, among others.

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

We basically had three main difficulties during this phase of the programme that in the end brought new opportunities:

- A community that has been reluctant from the beginning tried to sabotage the turtle conservation event organised by the authorities. In the end, they gave up their protests due to the support of the five attending communities and the authorities, but refused to participate to the event. Being one of the communities that exploit turtles more indiscriminately, raising their awareness is very important. However, a group of young people from that community approached us towards the end of the season to express their interest to form their own conservation group. They believe, by participating in the programme, they can help raising awareness of the other members of the community, particularly their leaders. The new group attended to the capacity-building workshop and are ready to start the beach monitoring next reproductive season (July 2011).

- Another unforeseen difficulty was related to the "Tori" conservation beach that the groups had been protecting in 2008 and 2009 and that had already become a reference of turtle conservation in the area. In April 2010, the high waters of the Amazon River attacked severely the small island where it was located and it was erased from the map. Nevertheless, this gives us an opportunity to concert with the communities of the area the declaration of a larger community conservation beach that can be protected by the five groups.

- A strong education campaign was carried out in the Yahuma II community in Peru, aiming to stimulate them to form a local group to participate in the activities. The campaign had very positive outcomes, especially by the schoolchildren (see below). However, although adults and young people participated in the meetings and in the educational activities, they could not agree to organise a group to participate in the capacity-building workshop. We will keep on inviting them to the different events, especially the young people, and keep on working with them so that they continue supporting the programme. Their support is fundamental since the most interesting beach is just in front of their community, and we will try to concert with them to declare it the new community conservation beach.

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

- Formation and training of two new local conservation groups in 2009, totalling three, that allowed very positive results of protective actions.

- The educational campaign in the Yahuma I and Yahuma II from Peru that gave several outcomes: a newly formed conservation group from Peru, increased awareness of the communities members, especially children and young people, and a beautiful stage play performed by the Yahuma II school children that will be used as new educational material for the local conservation groups. The stage play can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkqdY8TEUTQ>

- Involvement of two new local conservation groups (Yahuma I and Santa Sofía communities) that attended to the capacity-building workshop and will participate in the 2011 activities, totalling five active local conservation groups from four communities, more than 50 enthusiastic turtle guardians, men and women of all ages.

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

The programme is entirely community-based. It seeks for appropriation of conservation and empowerment of local communities as key actors and decision-makers in conservation and sustainable use of their natural resources. The idea is to give to local conservation groups enough tools so they can plan and carry out coordinated and complementary conservation actions and to look for and obtain support from other sustainable productive activities and from governmental and non-governmental institutions.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

It is fundamental to take advantage of the momentum of the project and its increased appropriation by the local communities. We are gathering support for next phase of the programme that will include: continuation of protective actions in the largest and most important nesting site of the area by five or six local conservation groups (we still hope that Yahuma II will participate in the activities); socialisation and awareness-raising activities by the local groups among neighbour communities and in the major ports (by local radio, newspapers and television); increasing involvement and commitment of environmental authorities from Peru and Colombia (we are also seeking for support by the Binational Commission); continuation of capacity-building and training of the groups; and

support and accompaniment to sustainable productive alternatives and conservation projects by local groups and by participating communities, as a reward for their conservation actions.

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

News and events on the programme have been and will continue to be constantly updated on the Webpage of Fundacion BioDiversa Colombia (http://www.fundacionbiodiversa.org/proyectos_tortugas_amazonas_eng.htm) and in the facebook group page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Fundacion-BioDiversa-Colombia/379586135314>. The awareness-raising stage plays are been distributed among different conservation organisations that work in the Amazonia so they can use it to promote turtle conservation, and are also available online (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkdY8TEUTQ> and <http://video.google.es/videoplay?docid=6075199196786203964&ei=dStASeGfBoruqALCqKDyDw&q=torichiga>). A short note of the programme was published on WWF-EFNews (<http://www.worldwildlife.org/science/fellowships/train/item6329.html>). We are gathering more visual material to produce and edit a video documentary to further diffuse the programme locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Finally, experiences of this programme are meant to be shared in conservation congresses and meetings, formally and informally.

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

RSG was used from August 2009 to January 2011. It was intended to be used during the 2009 season, but notification RSG was received in July 2009, when the programme had already started. We had received a grant from Turtle Conservation Fund that allowed us to carry out most monitoring activities in 2009, and used the RSG for the remaining activities: the turtle conservation event with the environmental authorities (September 2009), the closure event of the programme with participating communities (November 2009), the environmental education activities in the two Peruvian communities (June-July 2010) and the capacity-building workshop for the local conservation groups (January 2011). The latter was planned for earlier but, due to logistics of the trainers and other unforeseen delays, it had to be postponed until January.

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.

Budget Items	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	RSG spent	Other sources spent ^a	Comments
Personnel	£2,111	£ 2,180	£ 69	£ 1,378	£803	
Project coordinator	£556	£431	£-125	£ 431	£ -	^b
Field coordinator (local: Curuinsi Huasi)	£694	£694	£-0.23	£ 198	£497	
Professional in environmental education	£ 278.00	£ 287.88	£ 10.10	£ 288	£ -	

Professional in turtle conservation	£278	£ 462	£185	£156	£ 306	^b
Trainer in organization capacity (local)	£83	£83	£	£83	£ -	
Chief practical trainer of local groups (local: Curuinsi Huasi)	£ 139	£ 139	£	£139	£ -	
Assistant practical trainer of local groups (local)	£83	£ 83	£	£83	£ -	
Travels and living expenses	£ 1,865	£ 2,624	£ 759	£1,566	£ 1,058	
Airfare (Bogotá-Leticia-Bogotá)	£835	£1,462	£627	£1,280	£182	^c
Transport (by bus, by river)	£83	£ 176	£93	£132	£44	^c
Gas (for monitoring and displacement of local groups)	£946	£985	£39	£153	£832	
Food and Lodging	£1,183	£1,598	£415	£931	£666	
Food and lodging (researchers and trainers)	£751	£1,162	£410	£687	£475	^c
Drinks and snacks for workshops	£223	£245	£22	£245	£ -	
Snacks for monitors	£209	£191	£-17	£ -	£191	
Materials and services	£1,528	£1,318	£-209	£856	£462	
Communications	£111	£111	£	£78	£33	
Stationary	£111	£63	£ 48	£58	£5	
Workshop expenses	£556	£745	£189	£53	£192	^d
Educational material preparation and printing	£416	£99	£-317	£99	£ -	^e
Materials for monitoring	£278	£301	£23	£68	£233	
Promotion on regional media	£56	£	£-56	£ -	£ -	^f
Equipment	£1,389	£2,528	£1,139	£581	£1,946	
Small engines for local conservation groups	£1,333	£1,095	£259	£548	£1,045	^g
Field communication devices (2 mobile phones, 2 walkie-talkies)	£56	£33	£-23	£33	£ -	
Tags for turtles		£521	£21		£521	
Video-beam (projector)		£382	£ 382		£382	
Other expenses	£703	£776	£73	£689	£86	
Administration fee (FBC)	£703	£704	£1	£689	£14	
Research permit	£	£72	£72	£	£72	
Total GBP	£8,778	£1,024	£ 2,246	£ 6,001	£ 5,023	

Average exchange rate 1 GBP = 3268 COP. This actual rate was much lower than the calculated rate in the proposal (1GBP = 3593 COP) and varied significantly during the project period, thus the budget had to be adjusted constantly. Particular comments follow: ^a Other sources (excluding project counterpart) were Turtle Conservation Fund (US\$ 5.000), Idea Wild (Turtle Tags and Video-beam) and private donors (different materials for workshops). ^b We gave much more responsibility to the professional in turtle conservation and therefore increased her stipend, which was compensated by a reduced one for the coordinator. ^c Transport and maintenance costs were significantly higher than originally planned due to two main reasons: 1. For logistical reasons, the activities occurred in different times of the year thus we had to travel several times to the area. 2. We invited one additional professional volunteer for the environmental education activities and two more for the

capacity-building workshop. This increased transport and maintenance costs but improved significantly the quality of the activities, without having to spend more on stipends. This was possible thanks to the additional budget we received from different sources but, in the future, it will be important to project more accurately these costs. ^d We received private donations to buy stationary and materials for the environmental education and the capacity-building workshops. We decided to spend as much as needed in the workshops to assure their success and quality. ^e Most of the produced educational material was designed and edited by members of the foundation, which reduced significantly their costs, and that extra budget was use for other items. ^f This phase of the programme we focused more on raising awareness of neighbour communities and did not seek regional media promotion. We will focus more on regional media next stage. ^g The engines were given as a collective incentive for the groups after successfully completing the 2009 monitoring. With the additional budget from Turtle Conservation Fund, we decided to get better engines for the local conservation groups than originally planned, since their future mobility is fundamental for the follow-up.

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

In addition to expanding and improving the activities carried out in previous phases of the programme (monitoring, awareness-raising, involvement of authorities, capacity-building and training of local conservation groups), we feel that it is important to start implementing new approaches: awareness-raising of the consumers in Leticia, the major port, where turtles and eggs are illegally bought to the fishermen; advising local conservation groups in the formulation, fund-raising and execution of sustainable productive alternatives and conservation projects (which we already started in the capacity-building workshop); and production and edition of a documentary about the programme, using existing and new audiovisual material to further promote it locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

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?

The RSGF logo was placed with a link in the webpage of the project in Fundacion BioDiversa Colombia website as one of the funding institutions:

http://www.fundacionbiodiversa.org/proyectos_tortugas_amazonas_eng.htm

Credit was also given in the video of the play that was given to Yahuma II, to the local conservation groups and to different conservation institutions, and was also uploaded on the Web: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkdY8TEUTQ>

The logo was also used in awareness-raising posters given to participating communities, in flyers distributed during different events to neighbour communities, and in the individual and collective certificates given the local conservation groups (see attached pdf).

In any further printed or audiovisual material using media or information produced so far by the program, credit will be given to RSGF and scanned copied will be sent to the Foundation.

11. Any other comments?

In the name of the participating communities, we would like to thank Rufford Small Grants Foundation as well as other funding institutions (Turtle Conservation Fund, Idea Wild and private donors) for their invaluable support to this conservation initiative.

APPENDIX

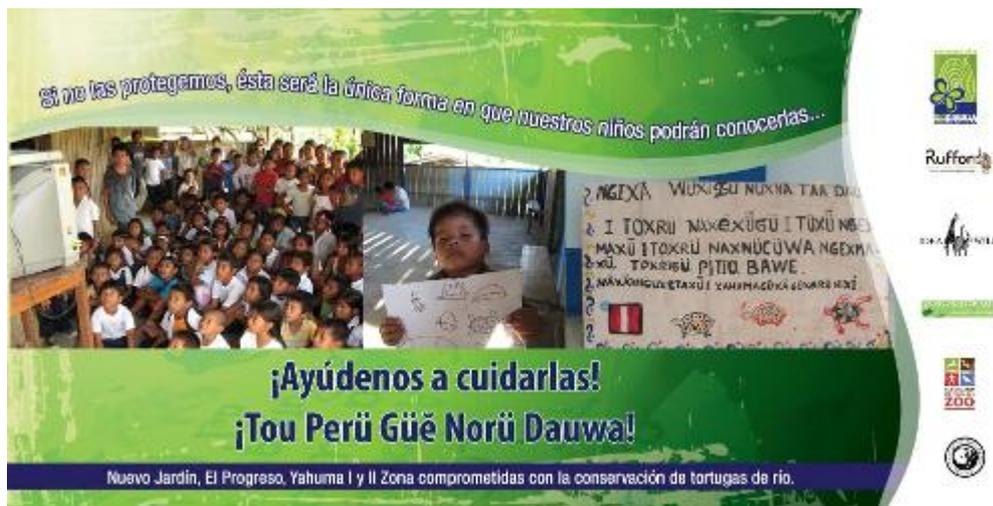
PRINTED MATERIALS AND CERTIFICATES

Two different printed materials were produced. The first was a poster oriented to the participating communities to suggest their commitment to turtle conservation. It says:

"If we don't protect them, this will be the only way our children will get to know them"

"Help us taking care of them! (in Spanish and in Tikuna)"

"Nuevo Jardín, El Progreso and Yahuma I y II Zona committed to river turtle conservation".



The second was a brochure oriented and distributed among non-participating neighbor communities. It explained about the conservation actions that the groups were carrying out. It had four sections:

Why are we protecting the river turtles?

How are we protecting them?

Who are supporting us?

How can you help protecting the river turtles?

¿Quiénes nos están apoyando?



La Fundación BioDiversa Colombia nos está enseñando cómo cuidar las playas para que las tortugas puedan subir a poner sus huevos y cómo tomar la información que necesitamos. También nos está capacitando en la importancia de la conservación, cómo manejar nuestros recursos naturales sosteniblemente y cómo plantear nuestros propios proyectos para hacerlo. También contamos con el aval de Corpoamazonia y el apoyo de distintas autoridades de Perú y de Colombia, como la Marina de guerra del Perú, la Policía Nacional del Perú, la Policía Ambiental, Guardacostas, la Brigada de Selva XXXVI, la Capitania de puerto, Senasa y las autoridades civiles de Santa Rosa, y esperamos que muchas más autoridades y comunidades se unan a nuestro esfuerzo de conservación.



¿Cómo puedes ayudar a proteger a las taricayas, a los cupisos y a las charapas?

1. Participa y colabora con los programas de conservación: si tú o tu comunidad están interesados en aprender a cuidar este recurso, pueden ayudarnos en nuestras actividades o conformar su propio grupo de conservación.
2. No las captures en la época de reproducción: no cojas ni molestes a las hembras que suben a las playas a poner sus huevos.
3. Protege los nidos: si encuentras un nido, no saques los huevos. Mejor borra los rastros para evitar que otras personas los encuentren.
4. Protege las playas de anidación: evita transitar o hacer fogatas en las playas de anidación durante la temporada reproductiva. No permitas que tus animales domésticos perturben a las hembras cuando estén anidando ni que se coman sus huevos. Evita transitar en embarcaciones con motor cerca de las playas en la noche.
5. Déjalas en su hábitat natural: si accidentalmente atrapas una tortuga, suéltala en el mismo lugar donde la capturaste y no la lleves como mascota.
6. No contamines su hábitat natural: no arrojes basura (plásticos, botellas, icopor) al río ni a las playas, pues las tortugas y otros animales pueden confundirlas con alimento y morir asfixiados.
7. No vendas ni compres tortugas o huevos: el comercio de tortugas y de huevos es ilegal en Colombia y en Perú, y puede acarrear hasta siete años de cárcel y una multa de hasta 300 salarios mínimos legales mensuales vigentes (Artículo 242 Ley No 141 de 1999 de Colombia). Denuncia ante las autoridades ambientales cualquier caso de comercio ilegal.

Programa de conservación comunitaria de charapas, cupisos y taricayas con comunidades indígenas amazónicas de Colombia y Perú

Comunidades de Nuevo Jardín y El Progreso
Asociación Curunsi Huasi
Comunidades de Yahuma I y II zona



Para que nuestros hijos y nuestros nietos puedan conocerlas
¡Ayúdenos a cuidarlas!



¿Por qué cuidamos a las taricayas, a los cupisos y a las charapas?

Antiguamente subían muchas madres a poner en las playas del Amazonas durante la época reproductiva. Los abuelos las cuidaban para no se acabaran y pudiéramos aprovecharlas de manera sostenible. Sin embargo, las playas dejaron de cuidarse y la gente comenzó a cazarlas y a sacar todos los nidos para comerlos y para venderlos. En la actualidad, ya suben muy pocas madres a poner en las playas y las pocas que suben las estamos capturando y llevándonos sus huevos. Es por esto que las taricayas, los cupisos y las charapas se están acabando y nuestros hijos y nuestros nietos no van a poder conocerlas.



¿Cómo estamos cuidándolas?

Las comunidades de Nuevo Jardín y El Progreso y la Asociación Curunsi Huasi, preocupadas por la escasez de estas especies, conformamos grupos de conservación para ayudar a protegerlas. Desde el año pasado, estamos cuidando la playa de conservación comunitaria "Tori" en la isla del medio detrás de la Isla de los Micos, para poder preservar una parte del recurso y que las tortugas puedan seguir reproduciéndose.



Todas las noches, un equipo de cada comunidad viaja a la playa "Tori" para cuidar a las madres que suben a poner y evitar que se pierdan los huevos.



También estamos recogiendo información que nos permitirá saber cuántas tortugas suben a la playa y si las poblaciones están aumentando o disminuyendo. Las comunidades de Yahuma I y II zona también están conformando sus grupos para poder ayudarnos en la próxima temporada reproductiva.



Two different certificates were given to the local conservation groups. The first was a certificate given in November 2009 to the each group for their conservation actions during 2009 and awarding them their collective incentive. The second was an individual certificate for the assistance to the capacity-building workshop in January 2011.



La Fundación BioDiversa Colombia y las entidades financiadoras felicitan al grupo de conservación de la comunidad de EL PROGRESO por sus esfuerzos por la conservación de tortugas de río durante la temporada de 2009 y le entregan como premio un motor para continuar participando en las actividades del programa en 2010.



Fernando Arbeláez
Representante legal
Fundación BioDiversa Colombia

Natalia Gallego
Investigadora asistente
Programa de conservación de tortugas

FUNDACIÓN

Comunidad de El Progreso, Resguardo indígena Santa Sofía y El Progreso,
Amazonas, Colombia, 23 de enero de 2011

La Fundación BioDiversa Colombia

Hace constar que _____, de la comunidad de _____, identificado(a) con documento No. _____ participó exitosamente en la **Primera capacitación a grupos locales de conservación** que se llevó a cabo entre el 17 y el 23 de enero de 2011, organizada en el marco del **Programa hacia la conservación comunitaria de tres especies amenazadas de tortugas de río con comunidades indígenas amazónicas de Colombia y Perú**. Los temas principales tratados en la capacitación fueron: biología y conservación de tortugas, técnicas de monitoreo de tortugas y toma de datos, experiencias de conservación comunitaria, acuerdos de conservación, estrategias de concertación y liderazgo para la conservación, uso de técnicas y tecnologías alternativas para protección de recursos naturales, desarrollo comunitario y diseño, escritura y gestión de proyectos comunitarios.

Atentamente,

Fernando Arbeláez
Presidente
Fundación BioDiversa Colombia

Edna Margarita Olate
Capacitadora

Alejandra Cadavid
Capacitadora

Con el apoyo de:



BIO DIVERSA COLOMBIA

www.fundacionbiodiversa.org