

Final Project Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Alerick Josue Pacay Barahona
Project Title	Tackling environmental threats through community service campaigns – Teachers and students of the Guatemalan Caribbean take action towards nature.
Application ID	24108-B
Grant Amount	£10,000
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1. 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
<p>To reach 6 communities of the wildlife refuge (protected area) Punta de Manabique by plastic reduction and reforestation lead-by-local-campaigns.</p>				<p>Five campaigns were done. Communities involved during the campaigns include: El Quetzalito, San Francisco del Mar, Cabo Tres Puntas, Punta de Manabique, La Graciosa, Santa Isabel, Puerto Barrios, Morales, Guatemala City, San Pedro Carchá, Cobán, Purulhá and many other institutions who collaborated during the campaigns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One single-use plastic awareness parade at El Quetzalito: an activity where teachers and their students created costumes made of plastic wraps and chip bags. They did a walk in their community to let people know how many trash they were producing and throwing into the natural habitats like the river that passes by the community. - One eco-brick campaign at six coastal communities: The team and teachers from last year's project launched a campaign that collected more than 24,000 ecobricks. This campaign also reached schools, companies and locals from all around the country. - One beach clean-up campaign: Led by one of the educators from our last year's programme and with the help of children at two coastal communities, it collected more than 18 sacks of trash from the beaches of Punta de Manabique and La Graciosa. - One reforestation campaign at Cerro San Gil: due to the lack of

			<p>land to plant the trees and create community-managed-forests, 3000 trees were planted in another protected area which serves as water supplier for many of the communities of the project. This campaign involved more than 500 participants from different communities of the Guatemalan Caribbean.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One local exchange centre created: This was a campaign led by three educators from our last year's programme. They created an exchange store at Punta de Manabique's school, where children can bring their own recyclable materials, such as tin cans and plastic bottles, and exchange them for healthy food and other treats. They did environmental workshops for children and other locals. So far, they have claimed that they ran out of tin cans on the beaches and now they are collecting plastic bottles.
<p>To build 6 classroom-like-conservation centres (6*4 m) made of eco-bricks at the communities.</p>			<p>Only one of six conservation centres could be built. El Quetzalito is the only community that got all the permits and were willing to help building the classroom. We had more than 16 people helping at cutting the wood, placing the eco-bricks (where children also helped) and covering it with concrete and painting it. Because only one classroom could be done, materials for the rest of the classroom-like-conservation centres were used for this one, improving its quality. The rest of the communities where the centres weren't built, had a reason of why the centre was not built there:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - San Francisco del Mar: Locals didn't believe the ecobricks were a good idea to build a

			<p>classroom. They also didn't want to help building it and wanted three builders, one architect and one civil engineer to be at the construction for 1 month (something that was out of budget).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punta de Manabique: They already had five classrooms and were using only one of them. They used another one for the exchange store created during a campaign of this project and told us they didn't want another building since they had plenty of space to continue with their campaigns using the ones they already have. - Santa Isabel: This community is located inside of a mangrove area. The only space they had for building was a swamp. For this reason, we couldn't do it there either. - La Graciosa: This community is located in a private land own by rich people who have chalets on the beach. None of the locals have land anymore and no permission could get obtained to build the centre there. - Cabo Tres Puntas: This community is facing the ocean on the extern part of the bay. Material transportation was not possible. Also, they already have a small hut they use for this kind of activities.
<p>To create and collect 24 thousand eco-bricks</p>			<p>We collected about 36,000 eco-bricks! Each of them made of plastic bottles of 500 to 600 ml, which represents around 180 plastic wraps inside of each bottle. This means that we avoided about 6.5 million wraps to end up in the environment (forests, rivers, the ocean). Nevertheless, only 4,000 eco-bricks were used to build the only centre at El Quetzalito, the</p>

				rest of the bricks will be donated to the Ministry of Environment and other institutions or people who now want to build with these materials.
To plant 6,000 native/endemic tree species for community forests.				Even though, we could not plant the trees in the communities we were working at, mainly because of the lack of land to do it, the reforestation campaign held during this project achieved in planting more than 7000 trees. The reforestation area was Cerro San Gil, which is another protected area which supplies fresh water to many of the communities at Puerto Barrios. As a project, we donated 3000 trees that were produced in a local nursery we helped to. The rest of the trees were donated by other non-profit organisations and the Government. During this activity we had more than 500 participants who actively helped to plant trees for a whole weekend.
To reduce 30% of the plastic emissions due to local campaigns				This objective was achieved with the help of another project we were running in the area. The project "Reducing the single-use plastic emissions at public schools of the Guatemalan Caribbean" sponsored by EOCA, which consisted in environmental talks about plastic and other marine debris. During this programme, we gave sustainable lunchboxes to children at school. Each lunchbox had two plates, one cup, one fork/spoon, a reusable bottle and a reusable cotton bag. After giving them to children, they stopped using disposable Styrofoam products at school.

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

- a) Bringing action to reality can be a little tough. During this project, the first barrier was that people at the communities did not have any land to create community forests. Even though the area we worked at is a wildlife refuge

and that is a protected area managed by the National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), many of the locals have sold their lands to livestock farmers and other agriculturists, and now, communities are surrounded by flat pieces of land.

Because of this, the 6,000 trees that were foreseen to be planted, were taken to another protected area called "Serro San Gil". This place is a mountain that serves as water supply for a lot of the communities in Puerto Barrios, Izabal. It is also considered an important place for natural diversity, especially for birds, reptiles and other small mammals.

- b) The main difficulty was the construction of the classroom-like conservation centres. As part of the campaigns, the main focus of this project was to get people from the communities involved and committed with conservation. In order to accomplish this, they had to actively participate during the whole project and also, to help building the classroom. The reason why the classrooms weren't built in each community are detailed in the chart.

To solve this, we decided to create a stronger and more consistent classroom-like conservation centre in the only community that succeed at implementing the campaigns and showed the support of the students' parents. For this reason, only El Quetzalito was the community that accomplished this goal.

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

- a) An effective and very active campaign to collect more than 24,000 ecobricks in Guatemala. This initiated a boom for many others to start doing this method in their organisations, institutions, schools or communities. Now, the Ministry of Environment (which was a good support during the project) is willing to replicate the model and start doing this classroom-like conservation centres in other parts of the country.
- b) The exchange store was a total success! Even when it was done as a campaign in just one community. The exchange store collected more than 400 pounds of tin cans, at a point that they ran out of tin cans on the beaches and the illegal dumps. Now, the teacher is also accepting plastic bottles so that children can exchange their recyclable materials for healthy food at school.
- c) The classroom-like conservation centre in El Quetzalito is now a monument that is inspiring a lot of people and encouraging them to use the ecobricks to build their own houses and other facilities. The class was given to the Ministry of Education, and will be used now as a centre where children will take science and other nature-related topics. Through this centre, locals of El Quetzalito also acquired the knowhow to build with ecobricks, and for now on, they will become replicators of this knowledge and will help others to implement the same in their communities.

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

Local communities were actively involved during all the project. Workshops at schools of the six communities, had an audience of 146 children and eight teachers. Also, teachers from the previous project participated as guides of the new educators, and helped them plan the different environmental campaigns of the project.

Parents and other community members were involved through the different campaigns. Some of them became facilitators, while others formed part of the staff who planned and executed the activities. It is important to mention that, during this project, a lot of help from different parts of the country was received. This helped us creating a greater impact and raising more awareness in more Guatemalans.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Totally! As mentioned before, The Ministry of Environment is considering replicating the conservation centres in other parts of Guatemala. Also, the programme to reduce plastic emissions at schools has been implemented as part of the strategic planning of the non-profit Semillas del Océano, which will be replicating it in other communities as well.

Semillas del Océano will also follow up the reforestation campaign made through this project, securing help for the next 5 years, keeping track of the trees that were planted with the help of key actors of the area.

Financial support will be tried to get in order to keep using the ecobricks and motive other communities to start building with them. Nevertheless, funding for construction is very scarce and sometimes some grants have limited budget.

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

This project has continuously shared on social media (Facebook and Instagram) through the Semillas del Océano account. Also, results will be presented in January 2019 at the RSG Conference in Guatemala.

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

From February 2018 to December 2018.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Project coordinator	2200	2200	0	
Architect	515	515	0	
Agronomist	103	77	26	
Educators stipend	742	796	-54	We gave an extra stipend for community members who helped building the centre
Tablet	135	135		
Clay and compost	200	130	70	
Raw materials to build	1800	2373	-573	We spent more than it was budgeted to make the centre stronger. For this, we used the savings in the materials for campaigns
Materials for campaigns	925	370	555	
Ink	65	64	1	
Food	1020	819	201	
Lodging	1030	580	4450	We stayed in a low-class hotel in order to save money. Also, in some fieldtrips we stayed at the communities in the houses of the fishermen.
Transportation	1265	1110	155	
TOTAL	10000	9170	830	

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

The next step is to secure funding to continuously doing community-based service campaigns. This because a lot of the activities done by the project had a great impact not only for the environment, but for society as well.

To replicate the classroom-like conservation centres in other communities and use them as places of inspiration and example of how trash can be still used. These places can also serve as a place to plan the campaigns.

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

Every workshop and activity done with The Rufford Foundation financial support was published on Semillas del Océano social media accounts (Facebook and Instagram). Furthermore, during the ecobrick collecting campaign (which was very successful) The Rufford Foundation was always mentioned in the newspapers, TV shows and other online magazines and news websites.

It is important to mention that the only classroom-like conservation centre that was built, has its own badge with the logo of The Rufford Foundation on it, and the clarification that it was built thanks to the financial support of the project.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Alerick Pacay – Grant recipient and project coordinator. I coordinated all the activities of the project and the budget execution. During the project I conducted the workshops and kept the track on teachers so that they could bring and polish their campaign ideas. I was in charge of writing the monthly reports and communicate the outcomes.

Jennifer Ortiz - Educator. She helped us at the workshops, creating the education programs and teaching some of the topics. She was also in charge of coordinating activities when the coordinator was not available.

Julián Serrato – Educator. With a background in agronomy, Julián helped us at the workshop about forests and endemic species of trees. He helped to create the seed bombs and gave technical advice to have a greater impact in the reforestation campaign.

Jaqueline Morales, Feve Cabnal, Ana Ramirez, Zulma Estrada, Yahaira Najarro and Alejandra Casasola – Educators. As teachers who graduated from the 2017 environmental educators program, they helped guiding the new teachers from the communities we worked at during this program. They helped choosing the campaigns and executing them in the communities.

Mildred Vázquez, Rigoberto Saldivar and Edim Lem – Community-based-teachers. They were the teachers who helped at implementing the campaigns in their communities. They took the community map workshop, and were in charge of bringing students and parents together in order to accomplish the project goals.

Volunteers. As part of the multiple campaigns held during the project, we had more than 20 young volunteers who always came with us to help during the workshops and the execution of campaigns.

12. Any other comments?

I would like to thank The Rufford Foundation for trusting the work I've done during the last 3 years in Guatemala. It has been a pleasure to be a RSG recipient. This programme has helped acquire a lot of experience and knowledge to become a new steward for the environment here in my country.

After 3 consecutive years of receiving a grant, I got the courage to open my own organisation called Semillas del Océano. Also, through this financial support, I have been able to create a huge impact in conservation, using education as our main tool to create positive behaviour changes in people in the communities.

Now, Guatemalan institutions are recognizing the importance of education as a tool for management and conservation in wildlife refuges and other protected areas.



Ecobrick classroom



Opening ceremony.