

CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION TOGETHER

Building our future



Conservation actions to change our community

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The fishing village of Canaan-Ce has completed the 2nd year of the education and conservation project funded by Rufford Foundation - UK and EnviroMentor - AUS. Padre Rodolpho High School has started its journey to fund its yearly activities in 2019/20, focusing on increasing conservation awareness in the community and also create better education amongst our teenagers.

In this newsletter, we summarised our main activities, and proved the positive impact of our project on student's academic results.

Activities



Looking after our Mangrove

Senior students participated on exciting excursions to the mangrove of the Mundau river. During the expedition, they collected rubbish, learned about the mangrove environment and planted more seedlings in areas where the mangrove vegetation has been deforested. Teachers were able to explain the importance of the mangrove as a nursery habitat to many species of fish and invertebrates, both from marine and freshwater environments. Moreover, with the support of local NGOs, the school has been monitoring the growth of mangrove along the margins of the river, collecting valuable data to be used in future researches. For the first time in the project, students presented their own work to their peers while still in the mangrove. This is a great way to show them that the school goes beyond its physical structure.

In this picture, students were paying close attention to the team of researchers.



Cinema Festival



It is time to shine!

Once again, the public square of Canaan town received over 2,000 people from other villages nearby and tourists to celebrate the end of school year with the presentation of short-cinemas. During the event, students with best academic performances in 2018 received certificates and awards. It was a night to celebrate education and conservation, and to acknowledge every teacher, student, company and stakeholders who contributed directly or indirectly to the success of the school activities. The event has now become an official date in the village, which brings excitement to the future students from grade 11 and 12. During the event, the audience listened to short speeches from our school principal Celio Ribeiro, who emphasised the importance of public debating and the collaboration of the community to protect our ecosystems.

In this picture, the square in Canaan, before the big event.



Reefs



Our Reef surveys

No doubt our reef surveys are the most popular activity/lesson in the school calendar. No one wants to miss the opportunity of studying the marine ecosystem, replacing books and pens for a mask and snorkel. This year, our students were able to investigate a specific type of fish, the cryptobenthic species that rely on the coastal reefs to live most of their life cycle. During the surveys, they examined different species of fish and their ecological functions. The coastal reefs represent the transition between terrestrial and marine habitats, unique and an important refuge for juvenile fish. According to our results, 57% of the species analysed in our samples are "permanent residents" of the reefs. A total of 14 species were collected and identified in our rock pools, and 50% of these species are classified as cryptobenthic species.

In this picture, our Principal and Biology teacher Celio Ribeiro showing the "Mututuca", *Myrichthys ocellatus* (Lesuer, 1825).



Sea Turtle



A Welcoming Visit

In October 2018, we registered a rare event to our local beaches - the sea turtle hatching of the species *Eretmochelys imbricata*, listed by the IUCN as *critically* endangered. The global population of the Hawksbill turtle declined 80% in the last 105 years (Meylan and Donnelly, 1999). It was a great surprise to watch the little turtles taking their way to the ocean and, hopefully, make it to the adult stage and come back to our beaches. We will continue monitoring our beaches next year to see if more turtles will come to lay eggs and, if that happens, we need to make sure that all artisanal fishing and tourism will not impact the behaviour of this species.

In this picture, Celio snapshotted the great moment of a baby turtle encountering the ocean for the first time! Safe journey little one!



Illegal activities reported



This is a crime!

In one of our excursions to the mangroves, our team of students and teachers had access denied to some parts of the estuary. The teachers did not understand why, then they decided to further investigate the reasons. Taking another way to get in the estuary, they flew the drone to find out one of the worst environmental crime ever recorded in our municipality. A large portion of the mangrove completely deforested to soon become a tank for prawn farms. The school took actions against the aquaculture company, registering this case in the Federal Police and the Environmental Office. While we work hard to protect the local environment and offer sustainable ways of living, this aquaculture company destroys an Environmental Protected Area (by law) to its own benefit. The school will closely follow the case along the year of 2019.

In this picture, a drone shot of the area being impacted, causing the loss of habitat to all ecosystems associated with the mangrove and the estuary of Mundau river.



Give Poverty the Boots



Boots from Australia to Brazil

With the help of EnviroMentor, we started an amazing program between Australia and Brazil called " Give Poverty the Boots". In this program, children from Australia are able to connect with children from Brazil, by donating his soccer/rugby boots. Such a kind and generous gesture from a child to another child who share the same passion for the sport, but have extremely different life conditions. The program initiated in September 2018 with the donation of over 20 pairs of boots from the King's school (Parramatta - Sydney) and North Epping Club (North Epping - Sydney). We aim to collect more boots from other schools and clubs who would like to be part of this program. Once the kids in Brazil receive their boots, they are encouraged to be active in school if he wants to play for the local club.

A local community leader has volunteered to coach the kids and to pass on information of the kids to the school, and vice-versa. In this picture, Anderson do Nascimento; his dream; to be a professional soccer player.



Thank you Rufford Foundation



It has been a great experience...

The 2nd year with Rufford Foundation has come to an end. We cannot thank you enough for the support during this partnership and for trusting us to execute small projects with long lasting impacts for the community. The school has since become an exciting place to be, with incredible professionals that are taking the risk of creating new methods of learning, and going above and beyond to see their students to thrive in a near future. Our mangroves are better protected, and the community is well aware of the importance of protecting this natural habitat. Our kids are more engaged to sport and cultural activities, which reduces the risk of getting them involved in drugs and illegal work. Our reefs are showing off its exuberance, and even receiving the visit of sea turtles.

We hope this partnership can continue and that we are able to scale up our Conservation Acts to have effective and positive Educational Results!

In this picture, students involved in school activities in the mangrove.

