

## *Networking, Educating, and Garbage Disposal for Sustainable Development 2012.*

Amigos de Isla Contoy (AIC) completed in 2012 all the goals that they had set for themselves. In fact, AIC were able to exceed the planned target groups and reached out to other coastal communities. The core project centered around education to foster an understanding and awareness of the marine environment, biodiversity and marine resources.



Report by Catalina Galindo de Prince

Because of the relationships developed with community leaders and stakeholders, AIC has been able to spread the concept of sustainable development in less accessible coastal towns.

AIC continues to extend its visible presence in community and cultural events in Isla Mujeres, Cancun, Holbox, Chiquila, Solferino and San Angel. AIC developed a mobile exhibition which is made up of life size marine animals and colorful self-explanatory panels and workshops for children and adults. More than 2,100 children and 900 adults participated in the presentations that were held in public squares in the towns.

AIC created a unique puppet show with animal characters and a stage, the theme being the mangrove. This show was presented at 24 schools in

Isla Mujeres and Cancun reaching 4,390 children and teachers. After the children watched the puppet show on the mangrove, AIC and the Department of Environment of the State Government held a drawing contest with the theme of the mangrove in which 698 children participated.

AIC accessed two educational courses from the Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, on biodiversity and climate change, and used its own courses on recycling reaching 2,058 children in the schools of Isla Mujeres. AIC-Members made presentations to educate teachers, hotel personnel and the state water commission personnel on recycling and sustainable purchasing practices.

At the Visitors Center of Isla Contoy National Park, AIC produced a permanent exhibition on Underwater Archeology in the Mexican Caribbean



In total 1,100 Children visited the exhibition on biodiversity and whale shark biology.



Participants of the workshop on mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the tourism industry.



Remote communities of the region are informed by a mobile exhibition on biodiversity and marine conservation.



Participants of the workshop on management and conservation of marine turtles. Puerto Morelos.

which is being displayed. At the end of the year, AIC completed a permanent new exhibit with colorful and self-explanatory panels on the natural history and biodiversity of Isla Contoy National Park, and a collection of life-size animal figures which includes a 6 meters long whale shark that sits two meters from the floor level. This exhibit is displayed at the Visitors Center of Isla Contoy National Park.

The community program for the collection of plastic bottles implemented by AIC in Isla Mujeres three years ago, continues to be successful, being maintained by the municipality and the enthusiastic participation of inhabitants of the island and tourists. Because of AIC work in implementing this program of plastic collection, the municipality has begun to construct a separation facility for recyclable materials in the island.

We would like to conclude that AIC is in a special position in bringing environmental education through its programs, presentations, exhibits and workshops to different coastal communities in northern Quintana Roo, and that we have reached a large number of people, children and adults who have been introduced to a better understanding of the marine environment in order to develop positive attitudes towards it. The efforts of Amigos de Isla Contoy in partnership with Lighthouse Foundation continue to be effective in their networking approach to promote sustainable development.

**AIC actions are as follows:**

Presentations of puppet show on the mangroves: 4,386 children watched the puppet play in schools of Isla Mujeres and Cancun. (January to May)

Drawing contest on the mangrove: 698 children participated after watching the puppet play (June)

Mobile exhibition and cultural program for the conservation of whale sharks:

Presented at Hacienda Mundaca in Isla Mujeres for 941 children, teachers, local people and tourists (June). Presented in San Angel, Solferino, and Chiquila Holbox for 1,100 children and their

teachers and parents. (December), presented at the Universidad del Caribe. (October)

Workshops on Biodiversity: 33 workshops were presented to 1,290 children and their teachers in Isla Mujeres schools (April, May, June, December).

Workshops on climate change: 11 workshops were presented for 371 children in Isla Mujeres. (November)

Workshops on the „3 R“: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle: 13 workshops presented in kindergartens of Isla Mujeres to 397 children (September, October). 10 workshops for 18 teachers, 106 employees of the Hotel Villa Rolandi and 23 of the State Water Commission AGUAKAN employees. (May, June)

Workshop for the staff of Hotel Dreams Cancun Resort & Spa: 40 employees discuss experiences of collecting, sorting and recycling of materials on Isla Mujeres. (October)

Workshop on migratory birds: Project Bridging the Americas, in alliance with the Center for Migratory Birds of the Smithsonian Institute: 4 workshops were offered to 143 children. (March, April)

Study to learn about the perception of the local inhabitants of Isla Mujeres about Isla Contoy National Park (June to September).

Summer workshops Baaxlo'ob Palalalo'ob 2012: A workshop on mangroves was offered to 40 children and young adults. The group was taken to visit the Isla Contoy National Park. (June, July)

Workshop to conduct guided tours in Isla Contoy National Park: 6 three-day workshops for 91 adults: guides, captains and boat crew members. (January to September)

Beach clean up in Isla Contoy National Park: A group of 32 scouts, parents, AIC members and park staff cleaned the north beach off plastic garbage (September).

Opening of the Education Center for Conservation at the Isla Contoy National Park: A new exhibit with colorful and self explanatory panels on the natural history and biodiversity of Isla Contoy National Park was completed and displayed at the Visitors Center, and a collection of life size animal figures (December).

Opening of new exhibition on Underwater Archeology in the Yucatan Peninsula and Caribbean Sea at the Visitors Center of Isla Contoy National Park. Project financed by Futouris Foundation, and in collaboration with the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) (July).

Workshop to reuse cardboard and plastic bottles. 32 kindergarten children learned to use old car-



Fisheries is of high importance in the region. AIC supports the development of management plans.



The problem of plastics and garbage on the beaches of Isla Mujeres is obvious.

board boxes to make butterflies, fish and marine turtles (December).

Workshop to make crafts with recyclable materials and presentation on Isla Contoy National Park to senior citizens in Isla Mujeres. 54 senior citizens participated in these activities (April).

Community Program for the collection of plastic bottles in Isla Mujeres. 45 containers are located in public spaces, outside schools, stores and beaches. The municipal government collects the plastic bottles and ships them for their recycling abroad.

Program to rescue and rehabilitate wild fauna of Isla Mujeres: In collaboration with veterinarian Delfino Guevara and Hilary Charles who runs a temporary shelter for wild fauna in Cancun. Several injured wild birds have been treated and healed. (January to September)

Presentations on sustainability: 2 events for 50 high school students in Isla Mujeres. (March)

International Conference on Geography at Merida, Yucatan: The AIC participated with a presentation of a study conducted in Isla Mujeres and Holbox on eco-tourism with whale sharks. (January)

Presentation of the fisheries management plan for shrimp species of Isla Contoy at the CRIP, Puerto Morelos. (September)

Workshop on mitigation and adaptation to climate change in the tourism industry. Hotel Oasis Smart, Cancun. (October)

Workshop on management and conservation of marine turtles. Puerto Morelos, Quintana Roo in Cancun, Quintana Roo. (November)

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**Project partner:**  
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