



MESOAMERICAN REEF LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Third Report- December 2011



BUILDING CAPACITIES

This year, the Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program held 4 training workshops in Roatan, Honduras, Punta Allen and Puerto Morelos, Mexico and Placencia, Belize. We were delighted to have international experts such as Luis Bourillón, from Comunidad y Biodiversidad (COBI), Paquita Bath, from Aligning Visions, Tundi Agardy from Forest Trends, Will Heyman, from the Texas A&M University, Roberto Iglesias from the National Autonomous University of Mexico Institute of Marine Sciences (UNAM), Melanie McField, from Healthy Reefs for Healthy People, Amy Rosenthal, from the Stanford University - Natural Capital Project, Norissa Giangola, from Spitfire Strategies and Eda Roth, an actress and communications consultant.

All of them gave extraordinary lectures, including training in project design, sustainable fisheries, public relations and strategic communication, negotiation and conflict resolution, coral conservation, payment for environmental services and public policy advocacy, among others.

IN FOCUS

2012 COHORT SELECTION

At the time of this update, the 12 new fellows (2 Mexicans, 4 Belizeans, 3 Guatemalans and 3 Hondurans) of the Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program have been selected.

After receiving 80 nominations from more than 100 organizations in the region, 35 candidates completed their application and were interviewed in person. Selected fellows will work on projects related to mangroves protection, evaluation and expansion of fish replenishment zones, establishment of new marine protected area, among others.

The 2012 cohort will meet for the first time in a workshop that will take place in March 2012 in Livingston, Guatemala. The fellows will be receiving training in project design and strategic communications and will have the opportunity to meet and interact with the 2010 and 2011 cohorts.

2010 COHORT SHARING IDEAS



Esvin Chacon with the RECOTURH representative

As a result of the MAR Leadership Network, 2010 fellows Esvin Chacon (Guatemala) and Yanú Ramírez (Honduras) have been able to share knowledge and experiences in community tourism in the MAR which is an important and additional positive result beyond expected outcomes. One clear example has been the exchange and the collaboration agreement that has been signed between Social Travel (Guatemala) and RECOTURH (Honduras) to create responsible tourism packages that truly benefit the communities and generate less impact in the protected areas in which they operate.



From upper left, clockwise: Dr. Tundi Agardy - Forest Trends, lecturing on payments for environmental services; Dr. Luis Bourillón - COBI, 2011 cohort and Dr. Melanie McField - Healthy Reefs for Healthy People.

FELLOWS IN TRAINING, EXPERIENCES FOR LIFE

YIMY CHIRINOS: FROM HONDURAS TO OREGON



One of the key features of the MAR Leadership Program is its ability to provide custom-tailored training, in addition to the structured group trainings. A clear example of the impact these individual trainings have on the professional development of our Fellows is the case of Yimy Chirinos.

Yimy is a 2011 Honduran fellow, newly appointed Judge in Roatan Island, who started his career as a prosecutor in the District Attorney's office. In September 2011, thanks to MAR Leadership Program's support, Yimy had the opportunity to travel to Eugene, Oregon and participate in a 10-week fellowship at the Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW). Yimy collaborated with ELAW staff during his stay to develop his vision for training his fellow judges in Honduras on environmental issues. He also improved his English skills through an intensive course at the University of Oregon's American English Institute (AEI).

Yimy has now returned to Honduras with an extraordinary experience and will be in charge of empowering judges to help communities to better protect the environment.

GABRIELA NAVA, THE CORAL GARDENER

2011 MAR fellow Gabriela Nava from Chetumal, Mexico is what we call a "coral gardener". Her project aims at restoring the coral reefs in Xcalak Reefs National Park, Mexico.



Gabriela Nava with Dr. Diego Lirman - University of Miami an expert in coral reef "gardens".

With the support of the Program, Gabriela visited the Rosentiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science and the Mote Marine Lab of the University of Miami, one of the most cutting-edge research centers for coral reef restoration in the world.

Gabriela is also excited to participate in the International Congress on Restoration in Australia, where she will present her project and have the opportunity to meet world class experts.



From left to right, the members of the Mesoamerican Reef Leadership team: Program Director María Eugenia Arreola, Project Officer Sandra Pompa, Creative Development Assistant Romain Doleux and Administrative Assistant Lourdes Gil.

WEB TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

In June we revamped our bilingual website (www.liderazgosam.org). Our new page allows for easier communication with prospective candidates, donors and partners. It provides a more visually-appealing representation of the Program matched with slimmed-down text and improved links between Program activities and various social networks. We see our website as a tool to highlight the work of our fellows and attract prospective applicants, qualified mentors and potential donors. We have also launched an Intranet – the MAR Leadership Groupsite – that serves as a virtual meeting place to promote collaboration, exchange and communication among our fellows in the growing MAR Leadership Network. Thanks to integrated links to our social networks, in a short time we have attracted a large number of followers on Facebook and Twitter. Going forward, measuring visits to the site as well as page popularity, search term priority and traffic sources will be much easier given the recent integration of a statistics for monitoring.

STAFF TRANSITION

The MAR Leadership team has recently evolved. Sandra Pompa joined us in September and replaced the former Project Officer, Eglé Flores. Sandra has a BS in Biology from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and is a PhD candidate. She has been working on worldwide marine mammal conservation and for some time has given a Bioconservation lecture in a master's and PhD degree program. Since October, Romain Doleux, who received his Master's degree in Political Science with a major in Latin American studies from the Political Science Institute of Grenoble, has replaced Riley Clark as Creative Development Assistant. In November, Lourdes Gil joined the MAR Leadership team as the new Administrative Assistant. Lourdes has participated in cultural exchange projects, such as the Walt Disney Resort Cultural Representative Program, education programs at the Center for Talented Youth of the John Hopkins University and the Spanish Immersion Program at the University of the Americas (UDLAP) in Puebla.

The MAR Leadership Program sincerely thanks the Summit Foundation, Oak Foundation, Travel Corporation Foundation, The Bodhi Tree Foundation, and individual donors from Global Giving for their exceptional support and generosity throughout the year 2011.

Mesoamerican Reef Leadership Program

Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature
Calle Damas 49, Colonia San Jose Insurgentes, 03900 Mexico, D.F., Mexico

(52-555) 611 9779

www.liderazgosam.org

romain.doleux@fmcn.org

www.facebook.com/MARLeadership