

Sustainable Tourism at the caribbean coast

The Amigos de Isla Contoy have implemented in 2011 what they had planned - more than that: it was possible to raise additional funds and to push forward eight projects in the field of biodiversity, ecosystems and marine resources. Some of these additional projects have also been the basis for the work that has just begun in 2012.



Report by Catalina Galindo de Prince

AIC has built a strong relationship with community leaders and many stakeholders who have given their full support in the events and activities carried out by the organization in Isla Mujeres and Isla Contoy. Through our work we have gained confidence with individuals in the Secretary of Education which helps to facilitate our educational program in the schools.

AIC has extended its influence into the general public by having a very visible presence in community and cultural events in downtown Isla Mujeres and Cancun. These public appearance presentations of the exhibitions “Isla Contoy, a natural jewel of the Mexican Caribbean” and the “Program for the conservation culture of the whale shark” together with the museum collection of 25 real size paper mache figures of marine life,

birds and reptiles , have opened doors to have an impact on a state level in 2012, as we have been invited by the Secretary of Culture and the Secretary of Education to make presentations throughout the State of Quintana Roo. The municipality of Isla Mujeres has asked AIC for a permanent exhibition downtown as they consider it important for the community and a positive projection for the tourists. The two exhibitions and animal figures received very good reviews from tourists from many different countries, and some of the positive comments came from scientists.

AIC made an alliance with the Migratory Bird Center of the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Washington, USA to provide courses on tropical migratory birds to students in Isla Mujeres. This is an exchange program with schools from different states in the north east of the USA. This program was very well received by more

than 350 children that took the courses.

AIC was able to project itself and its work in environmental education through a special program filmed in Isla Mujeres by TV 3 Spain, a major TV company from Barcelona, which was broadcasted in Spain in September. An interview with the executive director of AIC was published in the on-board magazine En Viva of the American airline Viva Airbus, which helped project Isla Contoy and AIC.

Supporting Cooperativa Vision-Mujer

One of the measures to improve fish production in the entity is to have the knowledge of the advances and new trends in technology with a view to establishing marine farms on the coast and make use of fishery products in a sustainable manner, promoting the participation of women in these activities.

Lorena Lopez, project coordinator of the Cooperativa Vision-Mujer, has made an arrangement with the Regional Center for Fisheries Research (CRIP) to start training courses and develop initiatives to enable us to boost our economic and social development and help the environment. The CRIP presented us with a first proposal to impart a first course in Biotechnology Transfer to Fatten Spiny Lobster.

“Our initiative aim is to empower women in managing cropping systems fattening spiny lobster (*Panulirus Argus*) resulting in a utilization of the resource in the medium term in a sustainable way. During May 2011 was given the first 20-hours-course in the Fisheries Research Station of Isla Mujeres and six members of our cooperativa participated. Given the success of the first course, we agree with CRIP to apply for self-employment scholarships to take the second part of the course, more detailed and extensive, with the aim that participants obtain financial support to attend this course. So we took on the task of looking through the State Employment Service of Quintana Roo and on September 14th they authorize 20 scholarships. With this opportunity to have more self-employment scholarships, we was launched a call to incorporate more women

in the training course.“

This second course of 120 hours was given September to October 2011 and 20 women participated. They applied the theoretical-practical aspects about: Biology of the species, - basics of mariculture, - installation and management of farming units,- handling equipment and supply air and sea water - integrated management of the process of fattening,- cleaning and siphoning,- diet and food preparation, -data collection,- and biometry measurements.

The members of the Cooperativa Vision-Mujer will continue in the application and extension of the knowledge gained, and now we are looking for a third training course for the use of fishery products, such as lobster molts for use in making handicrafts for production and sales and generate a economy in the short term, while still working on the development of alternative production systems in the fisheries sector and the



Die Frauen der Cooperativa beschäftigen sich mit dem Bau einer Langustenzuchtanlage



Die Ausbildung in der Biotechnologie der Langustenzucht endet mit einem Techniker-Zertifikat

production of Chitosan for Biofertilizers, among others.

Recycling on Isla Mujeres and sustainable tourism in the region

Thanks to the strength of the recycling program in Isla Mujeres that AIC started six years ago and continues its involvement in, the municipal government has been able to access funds to build a recycling center, and to purchase machinery and a truck for the collection of the materials.

Sustainable Tourism

AIC has trained this year 14 guides of Isla Contoy National Park in marine and land ecosystems of this island and surrounding areas, and has been asked by the Secretary of Tourism to register the course with the federal government so that it becomes part of the certification of guides of the national park and other nature protected areas.

AIC has continued building a strong relationship with the Underwater Archeology Sub Direction of the National Institute of Archeology and History of Mexico (INAH), and helped providing and coordinating logistics for the field work undertaken in the underwater museum project in Isla Contoy, the training of scuba guides in underwater archeology, and the research on sunken shipwrecks in the marine area in the proximity of Isla Mujeres and Isla Contoy. AIC also acts as a link between the team of underwater archeologists from Kiel University and the team of underwater archeologists from INAH.

AIC has received two small grants this year from the German foundation Futouris to sponsor the training course on underwater archeology for scuba divers from Isla Mujeres, for the production of replicas of historical cannon and anchors to be sunken in Isla Contoy, and to display information on underwater archeology at the visitors center of Isla Contoy National Park.

Period:
since August 2001

Funding 2011:
105.000 US\$

Project partner:
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