Inspiring the next generation of conservation leaders

Presented by Ms. Dareece Chuc
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Goal
Raising awareness on marine protected areas through the implementation of a conservation-based, out-of-school educational program for youths.

1. To raise awareness about marine protected areas and their role in natural resources management and sustaining livelihoods

2. To develop leadership skills through mentoring and fostering stewardship

3. To introduce and provide practical experience in marine research and monitoring methodologies

Target- High school 3rd and 4th form students
Programme Implementation
18 Months Model

Program started in 2014

Recruitment
March

May
Program start

July
Field trip #1

June –June monthly meetings

October
Field trip #2

March
Field trip #3

July
Field trip #4 & Open water dive certification

Note an estimated investment effort BZ$ 60K over 18 months
Measuring success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total # of students participating between 2014-2022</th>
<th>Where are the participants now?</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since the program was initiated in 2014, <strong>43</strong> youths have been educated on the importance of marine protected areas, marine ecosystems, life skills &amp; leadership and have been exposed to conservation careers.</td>
<td>✓ 60% of participants move on to higher education and are employed in non-fishing careers. ✓ 18% have gone into fishing ✓ 2% employed in direct conservation work ✓ 10% unknown</td>
<td>• The youths who participated in the program are now more conscious of their role in protecting marine resources and possible careers they can pursue in the marine science field. • 12 participants are open water dive certified and have basic research and monitoring skills making them easier to transition into conservation careers. • Program has a defined structure via a program manual (2021)</td>
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**MALE VERSES FEMALE**

- Females 42%
- Males 58%

- Males 58%
- Females 42%
Knowledge sharing and publicity
Challenges

• Logistically BAS staff is far from the participants. Requires more time and resources to implement activities from afar.

• Participants become empowered and eager to apply their knowledge/skills but often have limited opportunities to become employed or actively involved in conservation work.

• Responsibility (Liability) of the youths in our care

• Language* (Spanish is the preferred Language)
What's next?

- Develop “engagement plan” appealing to participants beyond the life of the program
- Launch a Junior Reef Protectors program with primary school children in targeted communities

If resources are available to continue to run the program, there is high expectations that youths from fishing families would engage in career options other than fishing & become environmental stewards...
Since its formation in 1969 the Belize Audubon Society (BAS) has been Belize’s foremost environmental organization protecting Belize’s precious natural resources.