

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p>Seventh Meeting of the Population and Conservation Status Working Group <i>Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 18 - 19 May 2023</i></p> <p>Island partnership to develop an education for sustainability program <i>Montserrat Lara Sutulov, Verónica López, Washington Tapia, Jorge Carrión, Christian Sevilla</i></p>
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SUMMARY

Galapagos Conservancy supported the NGO Oikonos in the development of an environmental education program for the conservation of endangered species on islands. This project was developed in Juan Fernandez and Isla Mocha, Chilean islands and the only breeding territories for the pink footed shearwater PFSH (*Ardenna creatopus*), a species included in ACAP.

1. INTRODUCTION

Galapagos Conservancy (GC) is a U.S. based nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Galápagos Islands and its more than 2,000 species found nowhere else on Earth, including the ACAP listed Galapagos Albatross (*Phoebastria irrorata*) and Galapagos Petrel, *Pterodroma phaeopygia*. GC works to save imperiled species, build a more sustainable society, and rewild the complex ecosystems of the Archipelago.

Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge is a nonprofit organization that studies and protects imperiled ecosystems in the U.S and Chile by engaging diverse communities through innovative scientific and artistic collaborations. Oikonos studies and protects over 10 species of birds including the ACAP listed Pink Footed Shearwater (*Ardenna creatopus*).

Both organizations work on the conservation of threatened island environments with an ecosystem approach that includes empowering local communities to build a more sustainable future for their home islands. Environmental education has played a fundamental role in this approach by preparing young people to contribute to greater sustainability in their communities.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Since 2016 GC –in partnership with other Ecuadorian organizations–, has been implementing an Education for Sustainability Program (ESP) throughout the Galapagos Archipelago. Core subjects (math, science, language, arts, social studies) are taught in the context of local and

global conservation and sustainability issues, emphasizing the interconnectedness of social, environmental, and economic, by extending teaching and learning into the community and natural areas. The program highlights the interconnectedness of social, environmental, and economic factors.

Research has demonstrated that this approach has several benefits for students. First, it helps them establish deeper connections with their communities and the natural world. Second, it develops their critical thinking skills by encouraging them to analyze complex problems and develop creative solutions. Finally, it motivates them to become lifelong contributors to sustainability in their communities.

Through its Education for Sustainability Program, GC is making a valuable contribution to the development of a more sustainable future for the Galapagos Archipelago and beyond. The ESP has offered 120 hours/year of professional development to all 430 PreK-12 educators, most of whom have demonstrated significant improvements in their teaching and has impacted 7200 Galapagos students.

Oikonos has developed environmental education activities with children in Chilean Mocha Island and the Juan Fernández Archipelago since 2012. Both islands are the only nesting sites for Pink Footed Shearwaters in the world. Working with local preschools and schools, Oikonos has been providing outdoor learning experiences that foster children's appreciation for their natural environment.

At the beginning of 2022 Oikonos received a donation to expand its environmental education work on both islands. The same donor had previously contributed to Galapagos' ESP so she was interested in connecting Oikonos with GC to receive advisement and learn from the Galapagos experience. This initial connection resulted in collaborative work between both organizations starting in March 2022.

GC advised Oikonos to start by developing a research-based feasibility study, similar to what GC had done in 2015 prior to launching their ESP, known as the "Listening Phase". GC led this study in collaboration with two Chilean organizations experts in education. The study ended in February 2023 and generated three main results: 1) analysis of the legal and political framework, similar initiatives and potential partners and funders; 2) deep understanding of the educational communities in Robinson Crusoe and Mocha islands and their potential for implementing an ESP program; and 3) recommendations and next steps. By following these recommendations, Oikonos can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of its environmental education work in the region, ultimately contributing to a more sustainable future for the islands

As part of the collaboration between GC and Oikonos, an online session on environmental education experiences was held in October 2022 with teachers from Galapagos, Mocha Island and Juan Fernández Archipelago. More than 20 teachers attended this session showing a high level of interest in cross-island collaboration.

This session marks the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing collaboration and shared learning between educators in Chile and the Galapagos Islands. It is essential to engage local communities in protecting these unique ecosystems, and educators play a critical role in fostering environmental awareness and promoting sustainability. This collaboration is an exciting step forward in our shared mission to protect and conserve the natural beauty and diversity of the Galapagos, Mocha Island and the Juan Fernández Archipelago for future generations.