

# Effectiveness of community-based education and fisher training programs to sensitize local populations in Haiti about sea turtles



# Jamie Aquino: President/founder, Haiti Ocean Project

**I AM AN EDUCATOR WHO HAS PROVEN THAT EDUCATION ALONE, IN THE RIGHT CONTEXT, CAN SOLVE REAL WORLD PROBLEMS, EVEN IN AN IMPOVERISHED AND CHALLENGING COUNTRY SUCH AS HAITI!**



**In 2007 I traveled to Haiti and founded Haiti Ocean Project, a local NGO based in southern Haiti working with local communities to find sustainable solutions to protect their endangered and imperiled marine megafauna. This ultimately helps the local populations.**

**WE ARE FOCUSED ON HELPING THE SPECIES AND THE PEOPLE!!!!**

**Our objectives:**

**1. Education, 2. Conservation, 3. Research**

**Involving marine megafauna:**

- 1. Marine mammals**
- 2. Sea turtles**
- 3. Sharks**
- 4. Stingrays**





# Haiti marine environment

**Over 1,700 kilometers of coastline and 50,000 artisanal fishers**

**Sea turtles are caught/killed along the entire coastline - this is a national problem we are working to solve!**





MAP OF HAITI

PETITE RIVIERE DE NIPPES

**Legend**

-  PETITE RIVIERE DE NIPPES
-  Port au Prince





# Haiti in the news



# The rest of Haiti





# Confirmed sea turtle species in Haiti: Leatherback, Hawksbill, Green, Loggerhead, Olive Ridley



**QUESTION: How have we been so successful in our sea turtle conservation work in Haiti, engaging and involving the local community members, especially youth and fishers?**

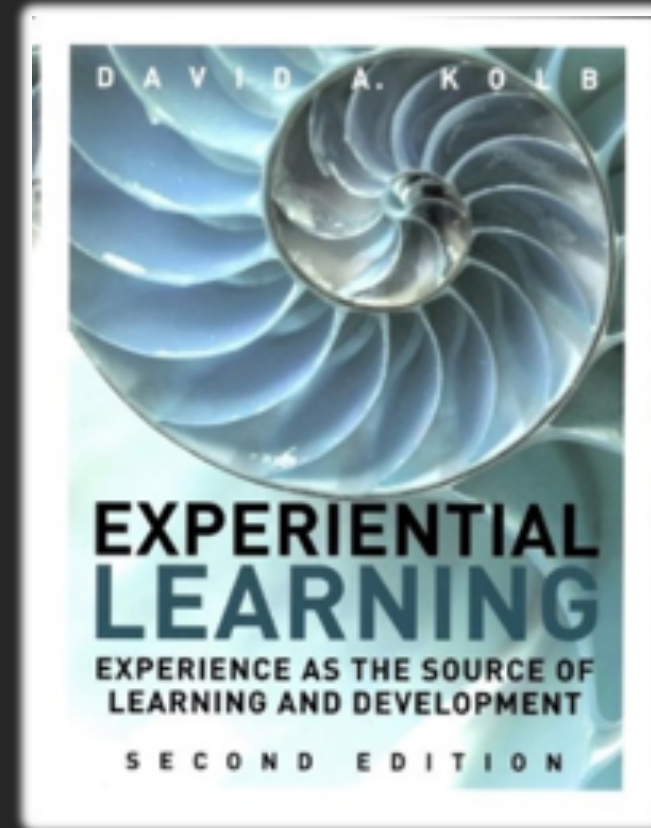




**ANSWER: Through EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, which I introduced to the Haiti Ocean Project team. Together we have incorporated this hands-on approach in all our activities and programs!**



**David A. Kolb, American educational theorist who introduced the  
EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY:  
A process where knowledge is created through the transformation of  
experience (LEARNING BY DOING)  
THIS IS HAITI OCEAN PROJECT'S EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION!!!!**





**Experiential learning theory follows a four-stage cycle, which learners progress through. The four stages include:**

- 1 CONCRETE EXPERIENCE**
- 2 REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION**
- 3 ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION**
- 4 ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION**

## **EXAMPLE: HAITI FISHERS**

### **STAGE 1: CONCRETE EXPERIENCE**

**We teach the fishers about the significance of sea turtles to keep the marine ecosystem healthy. The fishers also learn how to rescue and/or release sea turtles they might catch in their nets, with their spears or by hand.**





## **EXAMPLE: HAITI FISHERS**

### **STAGE 2: REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION**

**We conduct workshops with the fishers, to get their thoughts and feedback and identify any inconsistencies between the experience and their understanding.**



## EXAMPLE: HAITI FISHERS

### STAGE 3: ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION

**The reflection might spark a new idea or an adjustment to what the fisher learned from their experience. Fishers can use their voice and interject their own views about how saving sea turtles could be accomplished.**





## **EXAMPLE: HAITI FISHERS**

### **STAGE 4: ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION**

**The fishers will apply their ideas and see what could happen. Many of the fishers who agree to be a part of our learning process start rescuing and releasing sea turtles on their own, without assistance from our team. This shows their interest, motivation and desire to help protect these valuable species.**



## **“I DO, WE DO, YOU DO” Model**

**THIS IS ANOTHER APPROACH WE FOLLOW AND IT WORKS!!!!**

**I do - First, we model the new learning through guided instruction. ...**

**We do - Once we have demonstrated the task or assignment, the individuals we teach can practice on their own with support and guidance from us. ...**

**You do - Finally, once those we teach are confident with the steps required, they are ready for independent work. ...**



# Example: sea turtle flipper tagging



**I DO**



**YOU DO**



**WE DO**



# Haiti Ocean Project's Community-based education and fisher training programs

**Incorporating our direct and  
hands-on learning methods!!**





# Sea turtle community-based education/awareness workshops

## Conducted 20 workshops, 500 community members reached





# Youth sea turtle summer camp (2 conducted)

60 males and females ages 15-20

(learning to treat injured sea turtles, clean up beaches, swim lessons, sea turtle education and monitor potential nesting beaches)



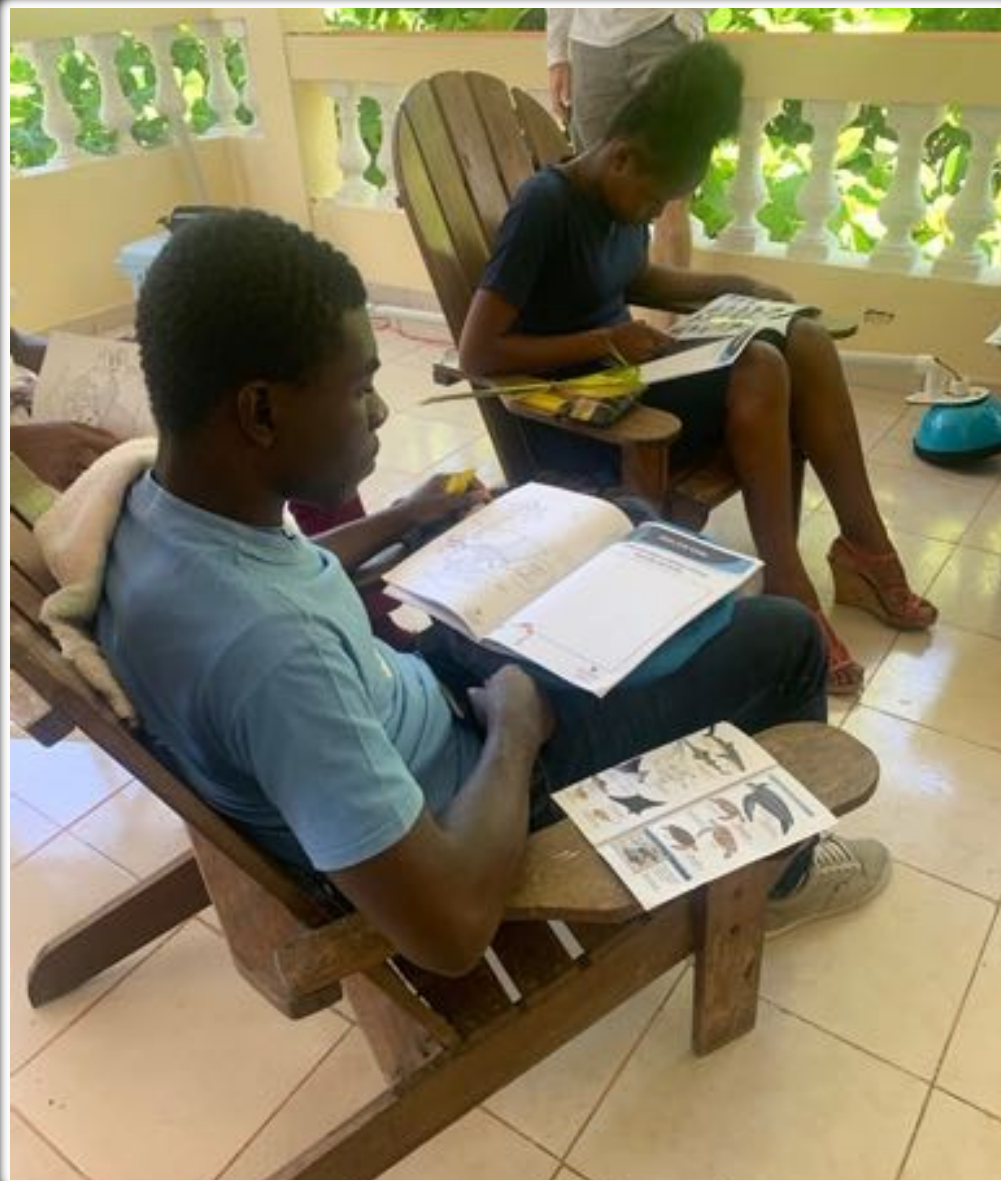


**Ocean plastic pollution recycling program**  
**Cleaning up beaches where sea turtles could potentially nest!**  
**(Plastic being melted to make products and used to make ecobricks)**  
**Youth collect plastic and sort and women are making the products/ecobricks)**





# Young ocean leaders program: (7 youth who wrote/illustrated 2 books about sea turtles in Creole)





# Fisher training/data collection

## Conducted 30 workshops, 200 fishers reached





# Fisher rescue and release program

Actively working with over 40 fishers in Petite Riviere de Nippes and neighboring coastal communities





# Haiti Citizen Science Sea Project

**Project funded by Our Shared Oceans, an organization in Ireland. It involves Haiti Ocean Project, Quisqueya University in Haiti and Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in St. Kitts. The focus is at Île-à-Vache Natural National Park and Baradères-Cayemite Marine Protected Area, both located in southern Haiti. Emphasis on marine megafauna, especially sea turtles. Facilitated by Kimberly Stewart, Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine will manage training of trainers in sea turtle field and laboratory techniques.**





# Francclin Barbier: our sea turtle coordinator

I have known him for almost 15 years – he is 28  
Born and raised in rural Petite Riviere de Nippes  
Grew up without his father  
In the most extreme poverty  
Only recently traveled outside of Haiti  
No college degree



**\*BEACON OF HOPE FOR ALL HAITIAN CHILDREN\***



# What have we accomplished through our community-based education and fisher training programs?



# Turtle rescue/release and tagging summary



**Over 150 sea turtles rescued/released since 2017**

**Over 30 sea turtles tagged since 2020**





**Recaptures / juvenile green and hawksbill  
“juvenile sea turtle habitat in our Nippes region”**



**“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn!  
Benjamin Franklin (leading figure of early American history )**







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Sustainable Ocean Alliance

WIDECAST



Haiti Ocean Project

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