

PRESS RELEASE

Punta Gorda Town, Toledo District, Belize
November 27th, 2012



On thursday, November 29th 2012, Ya'axché Conservation Trust and the Tz'imín Che Watershed Group of the Medina Bank community will inaugurate a solar powered computer-lab in the Medina Bank School library, in the context of the project entitled "Empowering Tz'imín Che' Watershed Group to Protect Freshwater Sources and Resources for Livelihood and Biodiversity within the Deep River Watershed and Minimize Impacts on the Port Honduras Marine Reserve and the Associated Belize Barrier Reef", funded by the COMPACT/United Nations Development Program.

The principal goal of this project is to empower the local community of Medina Bank, and specifically the members of the Tz'imín Che' Watershed Group, to reduce land-based threats facing the Deep River watershed, which drains directly into the Port Honduras Marine Reserve and impacts the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System-World Heritage Site. This project has different objectives, including to promote the sustainable use of resources within the Deep River watershed, strengthen the integrity of degraded riparian zone and river banks in Medina Bank by planting 1,500 trees along a one mile stretch of Deep River, increase community interest in protection of freshwater sources and resources by establishing an atmosphere of awareness and connection to the water source and promote long-term educational opportunities for the upcoming generation. Within this last objective, to empower the community with new technologies and new pedagogical methods through the computer lab will allow students and adults to access various sources of information, and will allow the Tz'imín Che group members to use mainstream software to manage and monitor this project and future potential projects. It will also bring electricity to the school building in a community that is not connected to the electrical grid.

The school library will be equipped with 400W of solar panels, one inverter (with its correspondent main breaker, charge controller and combiner box), two 420Ah batteries and two brand new laptops. This infrastructure has been set up so that it can be expanded in the future.

Jaume Rusalleda

Sustainable Land Use Officer at Ya'axché Conservation Trust and co-manager of this project