

FINDINGS REPORT OF THE
PARTICIPATORY PROCESS OF ECOLOGICAL DESIGN THINKING
WITH THE WHALES OF GUERRERO RESEARCH PROJECT



May 18 and 19, 2019
Barra de Potosi, Guerrero, Mexico



The information in this report has been collected during a participatory process in Barra de Potosi, Guerrero, Mexico, on May 18 and 19 of 2019. These sessions initiated a process that is still alive, motivated by the intention to formulate a vision for the Whales of Guerrero Research Project, which is aligned with the dreams of the community. The results shared in this document are the foundations of a collective vision that will guide the focus and the main activities of the project during the next five years.

Each day, approximately 25 diverse members of the community of Barra de Potosi attended, including boys and girls, youth, adults, elders, members of the tourism cooperative, members of the fishing cooperative, artisans and participants of the exchange in Baja California. Also in attendance were 4 team members of Whales of Guerrero, 3 members of the Board of Directors, 3 strategic advisors and 2 non-permanent residents of Barra de Potosi.

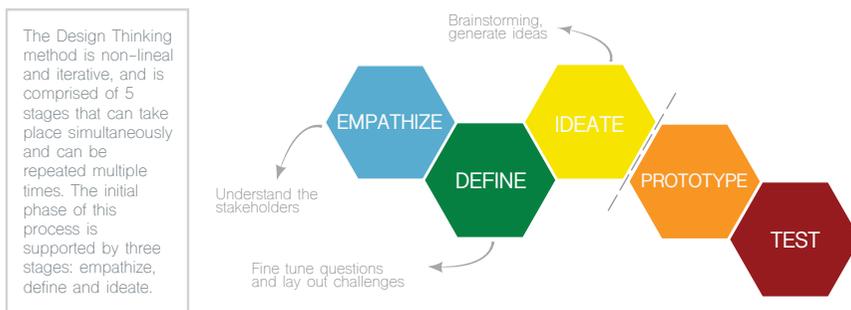
The sessions were designed and facilitated with the philosophy of Ecological Design Thinking, which is based on empathy and principles of collective intelligence including co-creation, through a method to resolve problems and generate ideas in a collaborative, practical and creative manner.

This was important because through diverse voices and dynamic tools, we were able to listen to what the population values and understand the needs for a communal life that is in harmony with its surroundings. Based on this, together we generated ideas for regenerative projects contextualized in the current local juncture.

Throughout the sessions the attendees were invited to participate actively and spaces where everyone could be heard were promoted. Together we went over the history of Whales of Guerrero, shared stories and experiences and reflected on what worked well and what could be improved. We participated in various exercises and group discussions where we:

- Dreamt and visualized a Barra de Potosi that we would like to see in the future.
- Understood better how we see collectively the development of our community.
- Identified what Whales of Guerrero could focus on to work in line with these dreams.
- Shared ideas of initiatives we could take in different phases, aligned with our collective dreams.
- Created an action plan to address some of these needs, concretely two initiatives around education and the natural environment.
- Laid out a strategic plan for the operational sustainability of Whales of Guerrero.

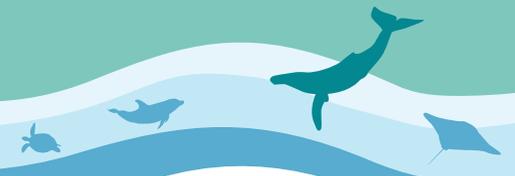
We concluded the sessions by affirming our commitment to continue this process. The next pages share the insights that were uncovered in this space of connection in Barra de Potosi.



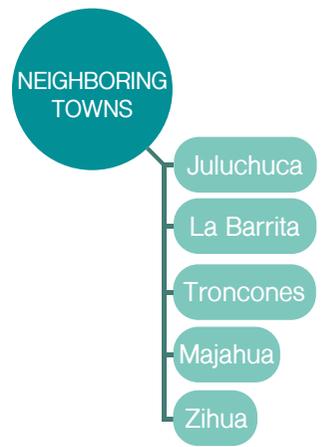
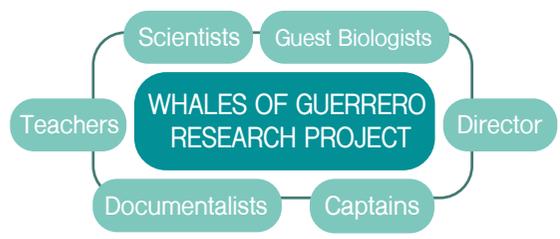


Map of the Whales of Guerrero Community

Developed collectively



THE COMMUNITY OF WHALES OF GUERRERO



Whales of Guerrero in the last 5 years



Anecdotes and experiences of the community with the project:

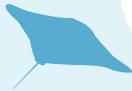
"The excitement of those watching the whales is contagious."



"I'm happy we now have these opportunities. My son is studying biology and the Whales Project inspired him. I am grateful for the economic resources and the knowledge. I have now learned to communicate with people."

"I value the impact this project has had on my son. There are more tourists watching the whales now and they bring more income to the town"

"I appreciate the yearly spring market"



"Because we live here we are responsible for taking care of all this".

"The excitement of the children in Juluchuca when the project visits them at school. They talk about their experiences for months after!"

In groups, a conversation was facilitated around three central questions to evaluate the project's trajectory and our experiences with it.

What was done right?

- Aperture to tourism
- Trainings
- Awakens the desire to learn
- Participatory project
- Participation of children
- It's a joyful project
- Environmental education workshops
- Closeness to nature
- Films and screenings for the community
- Learning exchanges



What could be done better?

- Include all biodiversity
- Recruit more people from the community to participate
- Generate more opportunities for women
- Promote more respect towards the whales specifically amongst boat owners and operators
- Attract more tourism
- Promote more exchanges

Leadership and personal development

Community strengthening

Appreciation of nature

Access to information and resources

More economic prosperity

Women empowerment

Scientific education about marine life

Trainings

What do you value most about this project?

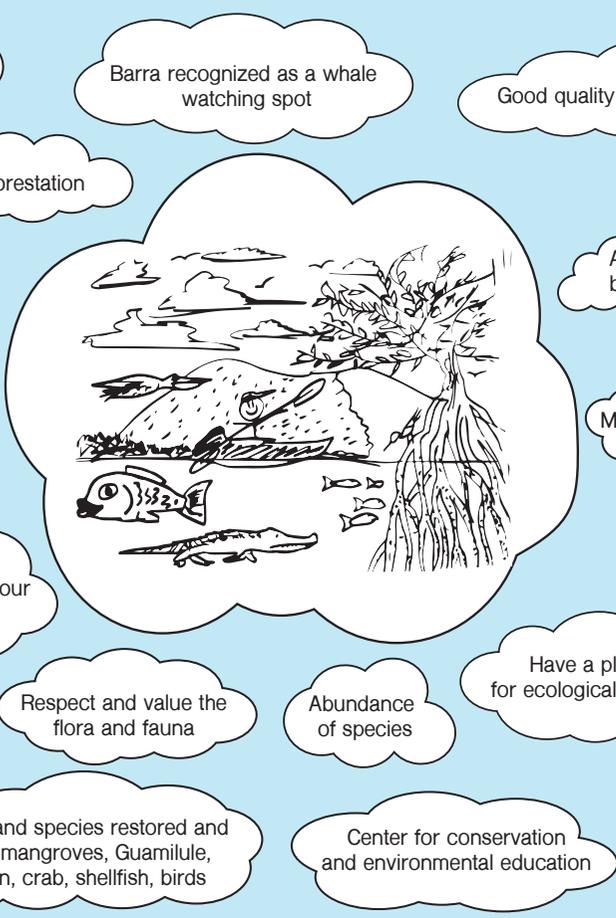
Dreams of the Community



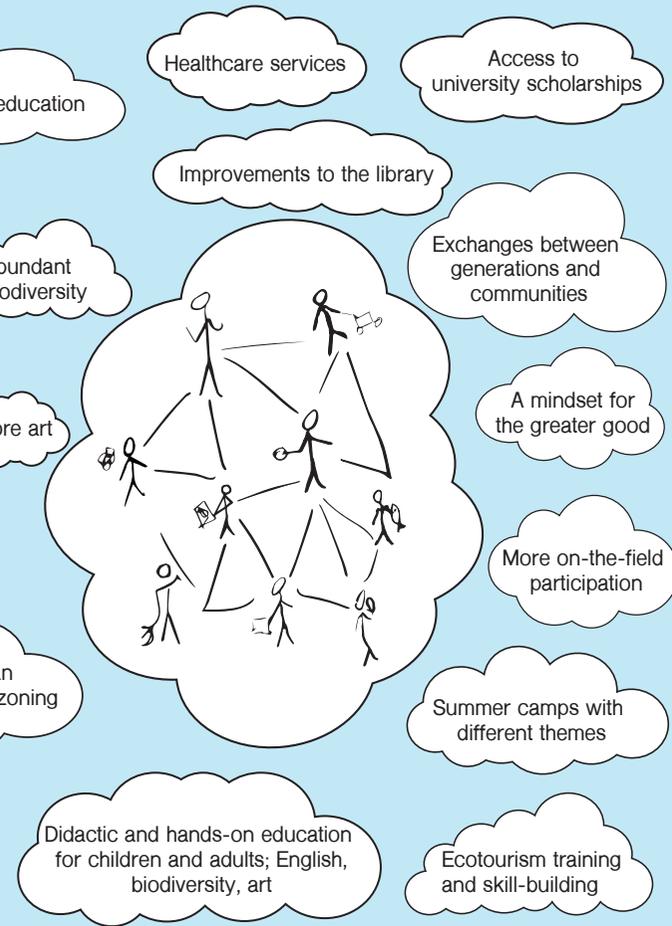
Economic Prosperity



Natural Environment



Education and Learning



The Dreams and Whales of Guerrero



How might Whales of Guerrero participate in supporting the community's dreams?

PROMOTE TOURISM

- Craft new ecotourism proposals
- Create cultural learning opportunities
- Provide job opportunities
- Be an economic catalyst
- Access to resources
- Articulate connections
- Open doors

SUPPORT THE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

- Promote conservation to attract more tourism
- Seek recognition as a whale watching destination
- Generate knowledge that can be disseminated
- Show a commitment to nature
- Establish sanctuaries
- Restore ecosystems and species
- Maintain environmental wealth which means a better quality of life

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND INCLUSION

- Foster spaces for different generations to interact
- Share the project's messages
- Work with the cooperatives
- Develop a strategic plan
- Be a community building model to follow
- Rescue knowledge from the elders

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

- Facilitate learning about the natural world
- Teach about local biodiversity
- Give importance to the flora and fauna
- Work with the children to reach the parents
- Articulate exchanges for learning and shared experiences

We agreed that the following elements could be part of the project's new vision:

- More diverse tourism (not only whales)
- Cyclical goals that are shared with the community
- Facilitate the exchange of knowledge

At the end of the session each participant shared, from their point of view, 2 focus areas for the project to prioritize in the next five years. The following is a summary of the collection of answers:

- Development of ecotourism
 - Promote it. Strengthen capacities and services
- Environmental education for children and adults
 - Include all the biodiversity of the place
- Environmental awareness
 - Clean ups of the beaches and town. Screenings
- Conservation and restoration
 - Local ecosystems and species
- Exchanges amongst different stakeholders
 - Between locals and with neighboring towns