

LiA Impact Report

Volunteering with the Macaw Recovery Network (MRN)

June – July 2026, Costa Rica

My Role

I served as an Environmental Education and Conservation Volunteer with MRN in their two locations in Costa Rica, supporting both conservation operations and community-based education. The role blended hands-on ecological work, creative outreach, and capacity-building for local youth.

About MRN

MRN is a conservation organisation dedicated to protecting and restoring wild populations of Great Green and Scarlet Macaws, through science-based conservation, habitat restoration, and community engagement, creating ecosystems and empowered communities that can sustain macaws long-term.

Why This Work Matters

MRN works in one of Costa Rica's most threatened rainforest regions, where deforestation, agriculture and habitat fragmentation have pushed Great Green Macaws close to extinction. Pangola's rural communities face economic constraints and limited environmental education, making local engagement especially essential.

SMART Goal Progress

Goal	Details	Completion
Develop engaging, culturally appropriate environmental education materials	I aimed to design clear, engaging, culturally relevant educational materials that helped children understand macaws, parrots, and local ecosystems in ways that matched their language, experiences, and community context.	I produced accessible, visually engaging materials tailored to local culture and learning styles. These resources strengthened children's understanding of macaws and were successfully used in Junior Rangers sessions, supporting long-term educational continuity.
Deliver interactive workshops and nature-based activities	I sought to inspire environmental awareness through hands-on, creative workshops that connected children with nature and encouraged curiosity, ecological understanding, and long-term stewardship of local wildlife.	I supported and delivered engaging, interactive sessions using art, games, and outdoor exploration. Children showed increased enthusiasm and understanding, demonstrating my impact on environmental awareness and connection to local ecosystems.
Support practical conservation work	I aimed to contribute directly to macaw recovery by supporting practical conservation tasks, learning fieldwork processes, and strengthening MRN's operational capacity in habitat restoration and species management.	I assisted with nursery tasks, habitat restoration, and daily breeding-site operations. I supported improved workflow efficiency and contributed meaningfully to MRN's ongoing macaw recovery efforts.
Build capacity through a volunteer onboarding guide	I aimed to improve continuity for future volunteers by documenting activities, challenges, cultural insights, and practical recommendations in a clear, accessible guide.	I created a concise, practical volunteer guide capturing tasks, tips, and lessons learned. Staff found it highly valuable, strengthening onboarding and long-term sustainability of MRN's volunteer programme.

This project reduced educational inequality in an under-resourced rural community by providing engaging, practical environmental learning that schools cannot offer. Through workshops, materials, and hands-on activities, I expanded access to high-quality science education and strengthened students' opportunities to engage with conservation and future environmental careers.



Lia SDGs



I directly supported macaw conservation and ecosystem restoration through practical fieldwork, helping halt biodiversity loss. By involving local residents in meaningful environmental action, I built long-term community capacity for protecting terrestrial ecosystems and sustaining biodiversity through education, engagement, and stewardship.



3Cs Development

Changemaker Values

Strengthened **Ambition & Determination** by contributing meaningfully despite limited structure.

Practised **Bravery** navigating language barriers and learning from local experts.

Demonstrated **Good** through inclusive education for rural students.

Applied **Fast** learning and adaptable problem-solving to empower teams and streamline conservation and volunteer processes.

Character

Built **Accountability** through reliable delivery of tasks and sessions.

Showed **Integrity** in representing MRN respectfully and ethically.

Practised **Humanity** by adapting to cultural context and building trust.

Developed **Courage & Temperance** managing discomfort, uncertainty, and isolation.

Strengthened **Judgment** in prioritising tasks and knowing when to lead or support.

Capacities

People- Improved cross-cultural communication and collaboration; Adapted to local needs and language; Practised empathy and global citizenship

Process- Strengthened time management and adaptability; Learned to deliver and support operations in unpredictable conditions; Improved ability to evaluate impact and adjust approach.

Performance - Enhanced critical thinking and reflective practice; Grew confidence working independently in unfamiliar environments; Developed resilience, problem-solving, and consistent high-quality output.

Looking Ahead:

- ▶ I will apply the 3Cs in future roles by leading ethically, adapting confidently, and grounding decisions in community-centred values.
- ▶ I plan to stay engaged with conservation and justice for underserved communities, especially advocating for equitable access to environmental education and opportunities.
- ▶ My contributions will support future volunteers and community members, strengthening continuity, improving practical conservation delivery, and deepening community engagement.