

MACHI NEWS

May 2010

Vol. 1, Issue 1



Ancient Maya places are sacred for many Maya people...



...but ancient places, like the site of Uxbenká in Belize (above) are disappearing as they are illegally mined for antiquities to sell in North America and Europe...



...and sacrificed to growing population and development like the site of Kaminaljuyu in Guatemala City.

Welcome to the first issue of MACHI News!

What is MACHI?

The Maya Area Cultural Heritage Initiative (MACHI) is an outreach program of the Research Labs of Archaeology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

What is MACHI's mission?

MACHI battles the rapid loss of ancient and living Maya heritage in southern Mexico and Central America by creating educational and conservation programs via grassroots alliances with local non-profit organizations. We provide the tools to empower indigenous Maya communities to define, interpret, and manage their world renowned ancestral past and to promote language, leadership, and cultural survival.

Why MACHI?

Centuries of colonization, discrimination, and even genocide have shaped the myth that the Maya are extinct. But the Maya did not disappear! Millions of Maya people live today in Guatemala, southern Mexico, Belize, and western Honduras. Maya communities have the highest levels of poverty, poor access to education, and limited political representation. They struggle daily for the survival of their culture and heritage. Ancient Maya places too, many of which are considered sacred, are destroyed every year by looting and development and Maya people are not included their investigation and management.

 **MACHI**
Maya Area Cultural Heritage Initiative

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Children from La Pintada excavate Casa Los Sapos, an abandoned Ch'orti' house near their community.



In Boca del Monte this May, students made Mayan god mobiles.

The Past and the Present Collide in Copán, Honduras

This month marked the beginning of the 2nd season of our children's archaeology "field school" where kids learn to read the past through the objects left behind. In 23 communities, our partners at Arte Acción bring Maya heritage, archaeology and conservation to life with successful children's workshops. This month's topic? Maya religion taught through art, games, and story-telling.

Empowering Communities Through Heritage Mapping

In Guatemala, MACHI is working with San Juan la Laguna and Xolsacmalja to define and map important community heritage as a guide for conservation, and a record of traditional places and oral histories. The maps will be made with GPS units that use icons (instead of complex words or numbers) to identify places of value allowing anyone in the community, from children to elders, to participate. Check out some of the GPS icons drawn by a local Tz'utujil artist below!



Quiché youth in Xolsacmalja learn about the importance of mapping their community.



Israel Quic listens as *abuelos* and *abuelas* in San Juan identify their heritage.



Natural place



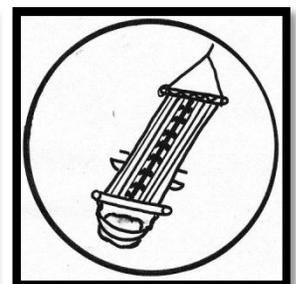
Ancient site



Flood zone



Coffee crop



Weaving workshop

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On the Radio



Harp playing at Maya Day in Blue Creek in southern Belize.



Teachers in El Petén participate in the design of the Maya heritage curriculum for grades 3 and 4.



4th grade students in San Benito, El Petén.

Tumul K'in Center for Learning

MACHI was proud to support Maya Day 2010 in March and all of the traditional activities that took place, including harp and marimba competitions and dancing.

Tumul K'in and MACHI are also working this year (along with our partners Fundación ProPetén) to develop a youth radio program on Maya values and cultural heritage. The first training for youth in radio production took place on May 13 and 14th.

Fundación ProPetén

In April Fundación ProPetén organized a teacher's workshop to assist in adapting 40 radio episodes of Entre Dos Caminos (At the Crossroads) designed with MACHI's help to teach listeners about the ancient Maya and heritage conservation.

With the help of the Ministry of Education, the curriculum will be implemented in 3rd and 4th grade in 20 pilot schools next year.



This month, MACHI received word that partner Mayón, A.C. will expand their cultural heritage radio program to include a Spanish language version!

Listen to the original in Yucatec Maya online at 3:30PM CST:

<http://ecos.cdi.gob.mx/xenka.html>

Help fight the myth of Maya extinction and give Maya people a voice in their own past!

Visit www.machiproject.org to learn more or to **DONATE** to one of our programs.

All contributions are fully tax deductible.