Introduction

Ecosystem Restoration Camp’s first ever crowdfunding campaign, #LetsRestore, galvanised momentum across the world to crowdsourced funding for ecosystem restoration. Our aim was to raise 55,000 euros to undertake the initial processes needed to restore the land and continue to build the camp in our first location, the Murcia region of Spain.

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Strategy

Our crowdfunding strategy involved deciding what Ecosystem Restoration Camp's funding needs were for the near term future, then creating a short film depicting life at the camp and rallying the world around the exclamation: #LetsRestore. A database of our network was created, and wrote emails in batches to each group to share the campaign with them. Facebook ads were created, alongside a countdown to Christmas with 12 days of #whatspossible, where 12 inspiring examples of across the world where people have restored degraded land were showcased. The campaign ended with a sold out educational event in central London with a panel consisting of John D. Liu (Founder of Ecosystem Restoration Camps), Maddy Harland (Editor of the Permaculture Magazine UK), and Michael Edwards (Founder of Sound Matters).

After six weeks of reaching out to our members, support base, and their friends of loved ones, Ecosystem Restoration Camps raised a total of 29,240 euros through our campaign website, and 6,250 directly to our bank account, with a total of 35,490 euros raised from 131 people.

We want to reiterate our gratitude to everyone that donated. You have helped the first camp come along in leaps and bounds.

Here is a breakdown of what has been achieved thanks to the money donated through the campaign.

Results

- 23 volunteers supported
- 5 structures built
- 2000 hectares of land supported (approximately)
- 3 landowners supported
- 1 camp business started
- 12 vegetable beds created
- 15 tools purchased
- 3 community events initiated
#LetsRestore: Funding Report

**Restoration**

The money raised by the crowdfunder has significantly improved the health of the land in the South East of Spain.

**Our plot**

Since receiving the funding through the crowdfunding campaign, the soil has been decompacted at the camp using a deep ripper, so that enough moisture and oxygen can penetrate. Locally purchased compost was then added to the higher areas of the land as it had suffered heavily from soil erosion and was in need of organic matter. The land then received rain and snow at the right time, which gave the freshly decompacted soil the moisture that it needed. Then a cover crop was sewn, made up of 32 different species of plants. We chose a mixture of both annual and perennial species with different ecological functions which include nitrogen fixers, diverse flower species to attract various pollinators and also a mixture of different root systems to help circulate minerals around the soil. These cover crops are now coming up and helping to bring fertility back to the land.

The campers have also been working on creating more fertility for the land through the spreading of organic matter using a method called Shivanj. This is a very fast compost creation method originating from India that only takes 18 days to create. Once it has been created it will be mixed with molasses, kelp, rock phosphate, basalt and *Aloe vera* to create a compost tea which will then be sprayed on the land.

Wind erosion is a big issue in the Altiplano region, so the campers decided to build wind breaks to protect the land.

An apple orchard has also been planted, alongside some other pioneer plants in the wetland borders of the camp and along the swales to provide shelter from the wind, aerate the soil and provide food and fodder.
Supporting Land Owners

Alfonso’s Farm

Alfonso farms a mosaic of 1,100 hectares of almonds, aromatics, apples, walnuts, and his land also includes natural areas that are not farmed. Camp volunteers have been supporting the regeneration of both his agricultural and natural ecosystems by planting trees in the gullies, and aromatics on the borders of his fields.

Javier’s Farm

Part of the wider restoration work carried out by the camp has been to support other farmers in the region in implementing regenerative agriculture techniques. One such farmer is Javier, who farms almonds. Volunteers from the camp have been supporting Javier with tasks that need doing on his farm, such as pruning his almond trees, and planting aromatic plants around the borders to attract pollinators. They also helped him to channel water through his land by creating dams to avoid soil erosion during heavy rain.

La Muela

A portion of the money raised through the crowdfunder was also used to support the eight volunteers who took part in the Restoring La Muela Mountain project. This project involved digging holes and planting out a variety to trees and shrubs on a mountain in a town nearby the camp. This was part of a large restoration project managed by our local partner, the Alvelal Association.
#Kitchen Garden

A piece of the camp land has been allocated for a kitchen garden. Twelve beds have been prepared so far, with more on the way. These beds were rotavated, covered in compost and indigenous microorganisms, and then mulched heavily with straw.

Our polytunnel has been repaired after being damaged by a storm and is now fully functional. We plan to grow a wide variety of vegetables and herbs in these beds to feed to people living at the camp.

The crowdfunder money has also helped the camp to set up an irrigation system which is powered by solar to pump water from a nearby pond in order to irrigate the vegetables and herbs planted there.

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#Camp Build

The money raised from the crowdfunder has enabled us to get to work on the construction of the camp. Some large purchases such as a trailer, a generator and a chainsaw have allowed us to carry larger items over a long distance, making construction at the camp much easier.

##Yurts

So far two more yurt structures have been created, alongside the platforms for them to stand on. We also bought one fully completed yurt. This means that we are on the way to having three yurts, able to sleep a total of 10 people.

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#Compost toilet

A second compost toilet was built for campers to use. The humanure created by this toilet will be used as compost on the land once it is ready.
Roundhouse

A stone and wooden round house is being constructed which is just slightly off of the five hectares that make up the camp land. Due to the structure being built out of a ruin, it is permissible to build it up as a permanent structure, unlike the rest of the structures on the camp land. The structure is a stone walled roundhouse on the bottom which will be underground and therefore cool enough to be used as food storage, and the first floor will be used as a dormitory for campers to sleep.

Outdoor Kitchen

An outdoor kitchen has also been constructed, which will be used by the campers throughout the summer. Work on the indoor kitchen for the winter time will begin over the next few months.
Volunteer Management

None of this work could have been achieved without the effort and dedication of volunteers. Since the crowdfunder we have welcomed fifteen volunteers to stay with us at our volunteer house in the small farming village four kilometres away from the camp. The crowdfunder money has helped to feed these volunteers with three hearty vegetarian/vegan meals, with food bought from local businesses, supporting ailing the local economy in nearby towns and villages.
Business Development

Part of the crowdfunding money has gone towards setting up our first camp business, making organic soap that contains plants that we are using to regenerate the land. These soaps are safe to use in our showers at the camp which operates using a grey water system so that none of the water used is wasted. The first bars have already been sold to our neighbours and friends, and there are plans to scale up production in time for the Re-Generation Festival happening in September 2018.

Monitoring

Thanks to the money from the crowdfunder the camp has undergone several experiments to monitor and evaluate the health of our landscape. First, the campers implemented the Visual Soil Assessment (VSA) methodology developed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), a low-budget method to assess soil quality based on indicators such as soil structure, colour and life. The VSA helped to describe in the form of analysable data the highly heterogeneous landscape, featuring white lime and dark, damp clay, and to lay down a strong
baseline measurement against which to monitor any changes over the years. To study our soil further, the crowdfunder resources enabled the camp to get 4 soil samples tested by a specialised laboratory to show what each different subplot needs in terms of remediation. Finally, the money raised through the crowdfunder was spent on field guides and tools to monitor biodiversity: birds, plants, butterflies and dragonflies.

**Outreach**

We have organised and taken part in several local events that have strengthened our bonds with the local community. The first was an open day that welcomed people living around the camp to visit to share practical restoration activities, food and connections. The campers have also made use of resources from the crowdfunder to attend local events to meet new people and strengthen the network of the camp.
Conclusion

The coming together of hundreds of people from across the world through the form of the #LetsRestore campaign has greatly helped Ecosystem Restoration Camps establish itself and its work in Spain. The soil on the camp land is on the way towards being healthy again, La Muela mountain has been reforested, and the camp will soon be open to the first people who will live there. Thanks to the money raised from the campaign, there will soon be a doubling of the number of volunteers available to support the regeneration of natural and agricultural ecosystems in the region.
Budget
Here is a breakdown of how the money raised by the crowdfunder has been spent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camp Build</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Design consultancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generator</td>
<td>718</td>
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<td>Yurt</td>
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<td>Trailer</td>
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<td>Canvas for yurt</td>
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<td>Materials for construction</td>
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<td>Tools</td>
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<td><strong>Restoration</strong></td>
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<td>Compost</td>
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<td>Materials for soap business</td>
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<td><strong>Monitoring</strong></td>
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<td>Lab tests and equipment</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Outreach</strong></td>
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<td>Tools and food for open days</td>
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<td>Accommodation, fuel and food for 7 months</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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