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Marine Protected Areas in Solomon Islands:

Establishment, Challenges and Lessons Learned in Western Province.

WWF Solomon Islands • May, 2013



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Acronyms

AMC	-	Arnavon Management Committee
CBRM	-	Community-Based Resource Management
CTI	-	Coral Triangle Initiative
CTI-CFF	-	Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security
CTSP	-	Coral Triangle Support Partnership
GELCA	-	Ghizo Environment Livelihood and Conservation Association
HICA	-	Hele Islands Conservation Association
IPECDA	-	Igolo's Peoples Environment and Community Development Association
MPA	-	Marine Protected Area
MFMR	-	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources
NECDA	-	Nusatuva Environment Conservation and Development Association
NGO	-	Non-governmental Organization
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SI	-	Solomon Islands
SILMMA	-	Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Areas Network
WWF	-	World Wide Fund for Nature

Summary of Steps Involved in MPA Establishment

- ✦ **Community Expression of Interest**
- ✦ Partnership Agreement
- ✦ Secure Funding
- ✦ Research –Socioeconomic and Biological (ongoing)
- ✦ Education and Awareness Program (ongoing)
- ✦ Local Management
- ✦ Exit Strategy
- ✦ MPA Site Selection
- ✦ Capacity Building (ongoing)
- ✦ Governance
- ✦ MPA Technical Work
- ✦ MPA Management Plan
- ✦ MPA Application to Ministry of Environment



Background

The World Wide Fund for Nature, Solomon Islands Program (WWF-SI), began coordinating Marine Protected Area (MPA) efforts with Ghizo Island communities in the late 1990s. This early work set the stage for the successful MPA work carried out under the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) National Program in the Solomon Islands, and is thus deserving of brief mention. Some of the steps listed above were originally conducted during this time, which culminated in the formation of the Gizo Marine Conservation Area (GMCA).

GMCA was initiated in 1998 by Ghizo Island marine stakeholders, including WWF-SI and the provincial government, with the aim of protecting key islands and their surrounding reef ecosystems. The creation of GMCA was in response to an increased level of community interest and concern regarding the management of the Ghizo Island marine environment. After a series of community consultation programs, it was determined that community-based resource management (CBRM) was likely the best method for achieving conservation goals within the GMCA and in providing long-term benefits to all relevant stakeholders. GMCA quickly became an integrated network of locally-managed MPAs, with a total of over 20 sites identified. Consisting of 30+ stakeholder representatives, the GMCA management committee was formed in 2000 and became the umbrella body responsible for the management of the MPAs. Shortly after, in collaboration with WWF-SI and WorldFish, the

GMCA management committee began the process of securing GMCA interests under a legal framework in an attempt to pursue enforcement of established MPA regulations. Such legal support would hopefully be realized through the development and approval of the Western Province Fisheries Ordinance.

During the same time period, participatory rural appraisal (PRA) workshops were conducted with appropriate communities, based on the locations of the proposed MPA sites. In addition to developing and strengthening WWF's partnership with Ghizo communities, the PRA workshops provided much needed information regarding the communities and their surrounding environments. The workshops captured information on the following topics:

- Population dynamics
- Community governance
- Community organization and institutions
- Social services
- Community economy
- Infrastructure
- Cultures and beliefs
- Community conflict and problems
- Daily routines and activities
- State of the environment
- Threats to the environment
- Resource use and patterns
- Resource mapping

During these workshops, socioeconomic research was therefore combined with biological research to capture the overall community environment, illustrate the level of community capacity for CBRM, and determine what aspect of the natural environment was in need of increased or strengthened management. The biological research would continue into the future, mainly encompassing reef surveys (coral, invertebrate, and fish species) and fish spawning aggregation monitoring.

While community participation and GMCA management was being firmly established, the required start-up funding to support the MPA interests of Ghizo Island inhabitants was obtained. Funding was provided through the MacArthur Foundation but, unfortunately, Mother Nature struck first. Just a few days after what is now known as the '2007 Tsunami', funds became available. Community consultations conducted at this time identified that Ghizo communities were no longer in a position to participate in marine conservation. Villages, homes, gardens, kanus - lives, needed to be rebuilt. The funds available through the MacArthur Foundation did not reach the small island of Ghizo, in Western Province, Solomon Islands...not at this time.



Coral Triangle Initiative

One could argue that nature was responsible for the abandonment of marine conservation efforts in 2007. Although this is largely the reality, the natural marine environment surrounding Solomon Islands has also provided Solomon Islanders with an opportunity to advance marine conservation efforts in recent years. The staggering coral and marine biodiversity found within Solomon Island

waters warrants the inclusion of Solomon Islands in the Coral Triangle. Known as the global centre of marine biodiversity, or the nursery of the seas, the Coral Triangle is a triangular geographic area named for the 500+ species of coral found within its boundaries.



In 2007, a multilateral partnership between the six Coral Triangle countries called The Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF), was formed. CTI-CFF was established to address the urgent threats facing the coastal and marine resources of one of the most biologically diverse and ecologically rich regions on earth (CTI-CFF, 2013). Through the Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP), support was available for Solomon Islands to achieve their CTI-CFF National Plan of Action: adopt a people-centered approach to integrated resource management where communities are the primary drivers and beneficiaries of sustainable resource management (CTI-CFF, 2013). While a broad range of activities are supported under CTI-CFF in Solomon Islands, WWF-SI has utilized support to advance community based resource management of priority marine areas around Ghizo Island, Western Province. The ultimate goal is the establishment of a resilient MPA network that integrates fisheries, biodiversity and climate change objectives.

The remainder of this report will summarize the activities implemented by WWF-SI and Ghizo communities in working towards achieving this goal. The following pages illustrate the steps taken to advance CBRM of MPAs around Ghizo Island, acknowledge the challenges encountered, identify next steps and reflect upon the lessons learned.



Education & Awareness

As pre-tsunami efforts provided the foundation upon which MPA work under CTI-CFF would build, when CTSP funding became available Ghizo Island stakeholders enjoyed a head start in the race to establish greater management of their marine areas. Communities were immediately engaged in an education and awareness program (step 5 listed above, but this aspect of the

process is hard to place in a sequence of events as it is ongoing throughout). While education and awareness is a component of most conservation initiatives, and is generally ongoing, the early stages of the education and awareness program initiated in 2009, under CTI-CFF, had a slightly different theme: The Coral Triangle Initiative. Ghizo communities were educated on what it meant to be citizens of one of six Coral Triangle countries, they were presented with the goals, aims and objectives of CTI-CFF, they heard about Solomon Islands' National Plan of Action under CTI-CFF and, perhaps most importantly, they discussed what this all meant for the inhabitants of Ghizo Island. How could this new initiative help to sustain or improve livelihoods? What opportunities did this initiative

provide for enhancing the management of marine resources relied upon by Ghizo communities? These education and awareness ‘sessions’ were conducted in the larger villages around the island (9, in total), while community members from neighbouring, smaller villages were invited to join the nearest discussion. Two years had passed since the tsunami hit, and there was once again capacity amongst Ghizo communities to pursue the protection of their marine and coastal resource interests. After learning about the potential progress that could be made with available CTSP funding, Ghizo communities agreed the time was right to resume the MPA efforts that were initiated almost a decade ago.

It should be kept in mind that, as mentioned, this education and awareness program is ongoing. Although the focus of education and awareness efforts may differ, depending on the current situation, the target audience remains the same: communities, schools and the general public. In addition to community and school presentations, field trips and youth group engagements, education and awareness materials have been created and distributed as appropriate to help spread the desired messages. Some of the general topics covered by the education and awareness program under CTI-CFF include: climate change, the marine environment, mangrove habitat, coral reef habitat, seagrass habitat, pollution, spawning aggregations, MPAs, overfishing, destructive fishing practices and fish ecology. The education and awareness program has been incredibly important and valuable in attempts made to engage the communities in CBRM and MPA work.



Beach clean-up with high school students from the Titiana community.



Local Management

Just as Ghizo communities were in no position to focus on marine conservation efforts after the tsunami, the GMCA management committee also went into a state of dormancy. The revival of the

committee was the first step once it was decided that MPA work would resume under CTI-CFF. After numerous meetings, the GMCA management committee decided it would be beneficial to divide Ghizo communities into management units. As a result, the 30+ Ghizo Island communities were placed into one of five zones. To better represent each zone, the original GMCA management committee was then streamlined and reduced to 10 individuals, with at least one representative from each zone. This proved an appropriate time for the management committee to consider applying to become a registered association within Solomon Islands. The GMCA management plan and association constitution was sent along with an application, resulting in the creation of the Ghizo Environment Livelihood and Conservation Association (GELCA). The management committee representing the interests of Ghizo Island inhabitants was now an official association that could apply for funding to carry out various livelihood and conservation projects.

Although still largely supported by WWF, the establishment of GELCA has enabled much progress on the MPA front that likely would have taken much longer to achieve in its absence. GELCA has played a pivotal role in the following areas: decision making, regarding the livelihoods/conservation of Ghizo Island; conflict resolution between communities; generating support within communities; enhancing community education and awareness of various livelihood/conservation issues and opportunities; dissemination of information, ensuring communities are kept well informed of ongoing research; and maintaining clear communications between stakeholders, helping to clarify any misunderstandings or uncertainties at the community level.

As in the past, GELCA will continue to influence the success of livelihood and conservation activities occurring on Ghizo Island. Next steps for the association include various capacity building efforts so that it may emerge from underneath the WWF umbrella, becoming more independent and self-sufficient.



Jeffrey Kalamana, Nuatali Veniyy, and Tastre Ataria are community leaders in the Ghizo Environmental Livelihood and Conservation Association.

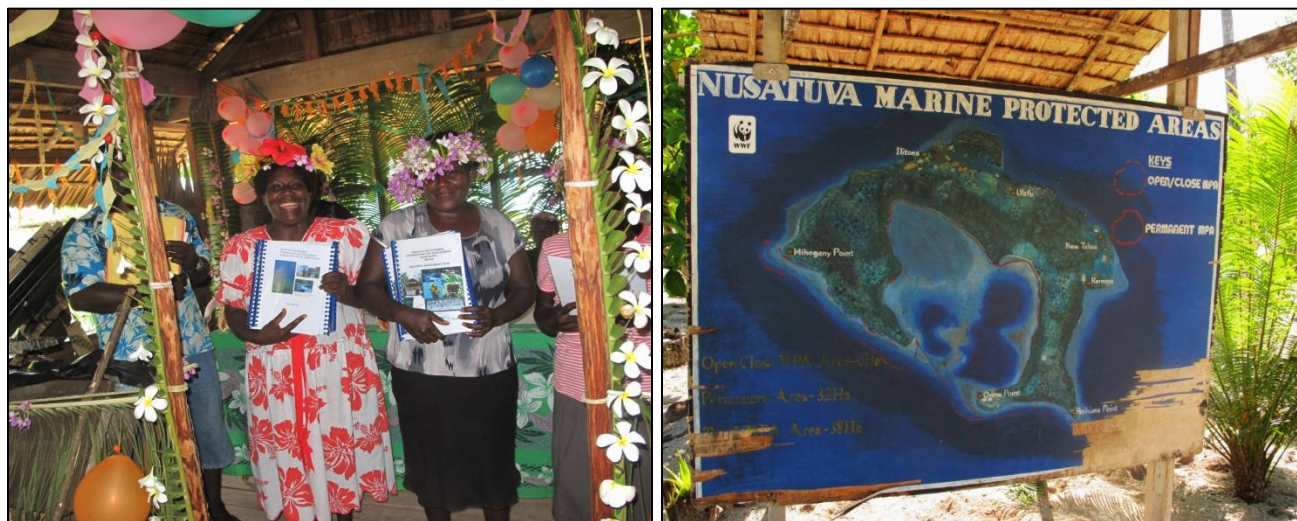


Exit Strategy

While MPA work had only recently been revived, it was important to plan ahead to the future when stakeholders would assume the leading role in CBRM around Ghizo Island. Thus, efforts were made to establish appropriate local management bodies for community and CBRM support. Such efforts began with the GMCA, resulting in the establishment GELCA, a local management association legally registered within Solomon Islands. Although much time and work is required for GELCA to become an efficiently operating management body, the foundation has been laid.

Although outside of the declared CTI-CFF integration site (Ghizo Island), CTSP funding was approved for the establishment of management bodies on other nearby islands within Western Province, as well. Three other associations were created and have been legally registered within Solomon Islands, thus

strengthening conservation capacity within Western Province: the Hele Islands Conservation Association (HICA) was established to oversee the management of the Hele Islands Conservation Area in the south of Western Province; the Igolo's Peoples Environment and Community Development Association (IPECDA) is now the management body in place to manage the Northwest Kohinggo MPA, at the northern entrance of Vona Vona Lagoon; and the Nusatuva Environment Conservation and Development Association (NECDA) was created to enhance the management of multiple sites around Nusa Tuva Island, along the south coast of Kolombangara.



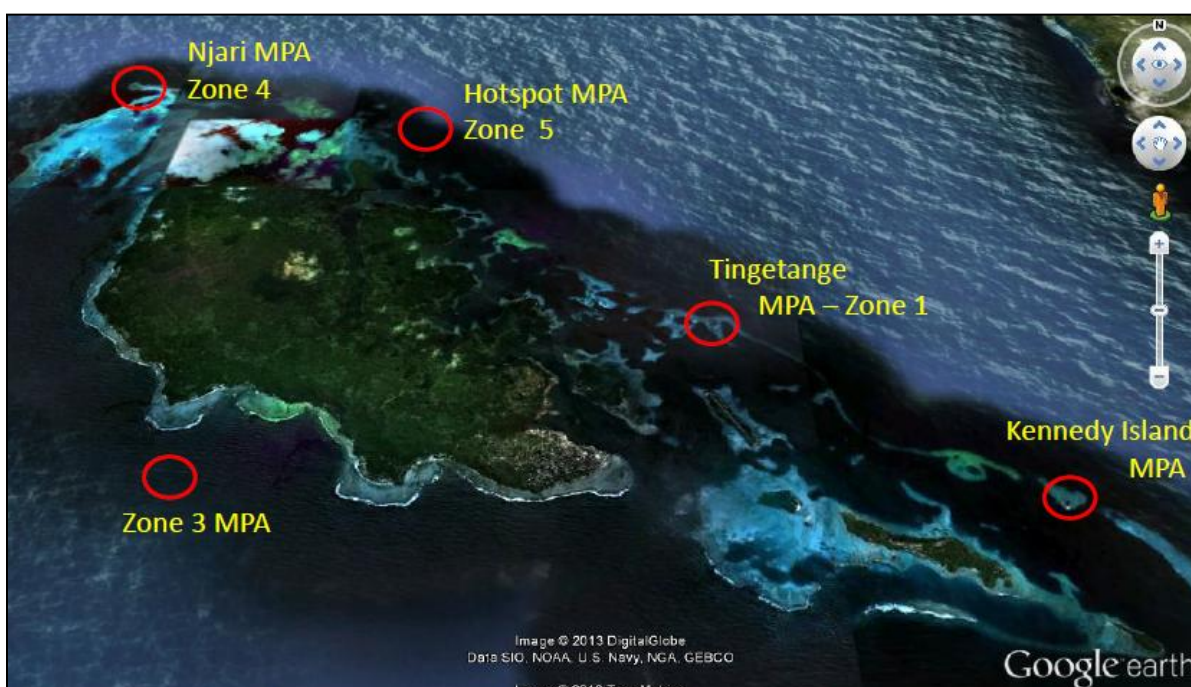
Ceremony in celebration of the Nusatuva MPA and formation of NECDA.

With new management bodies in place within Western Province, communities will hopefully be able to work together, independent of outside partners, to achieve current and future marine conservation objectives through successful CBRM. As efforts spread throughout the province, a greater number of communities stand to benefit from CBRM and the state of the Western Province marine environment is more likely to remain healthy or successfully be restored.



MPA Site Selection

The ongoing community consultations and biological monitoring discussed briefly above allowed for the originally identified MPA sites to be streamlined. Ongoing fish spawning aggregation monitoring, especially, proved to be of great value and provided important information when GELCA was considering MPA site selection. The 20+ sites were reduced by GELCA to five, based on community capacity and biological data, enabling traditional resource management practices and CBRM to focus on a more realistic goal. Once the five sites were agreed upon by GELCA, community and private sector consultations occurred so that MPA plans could be discussed with all Ghizo Island stakeholders. The various stakeholders were supportive of the MPA plans and expressed much interest to cooperate and be involved in the process. Partnerships were created around Ghizo Islands, increasing the likelihood of MPA success and proving that the importance of conserving the surrounding environment was realized by most.



*Note: due to some unforeseen development within the private sector at one of the identified MPA sites, it is possible that those site plans will be dropped and a different area will be selected as an MPA site for registration under the Protected Area Act.



Capacity Building

With the various stakeholders on board to advance MPA plans around Ghizo Island, efforts to build stakeholder capacity for achieving successful CBRM were initiated. Again, it should be noted that these efforts are ongoing and will hopefully continue into the future, beyond the CTI-CFF timeline.

GELCA – local management

Although the majority of capacity building efforts for GELCA are anticipated to occur in the future, there is one story worth telling here. Approximately 140kms northeast of Ghizo Island is a group of islands called Arnavon. Nestled between the islands of Santa Isabel and Choiseul, the Arnavon Islands are a regionally significant rookery area for hawksbill turtles (UNDP, 2012). Three nearby communities partnered with The Nature Conservancy to implement conservation projects in an attempt to protect the Arnavon environment and all the species within it, particularly the turtle. In the early 1990s, the Arnavon Management Committee (AMC) was established and two years later the Arnavon Community Marine Conservation Area was born. Within this conservation area is a fully protected 157km² MPA. Since the establishment of this protected area, the critically endangered hawksbill turtle has increased by nearly 400% (UNDP, 2012). Under CTSP funding, the 10 GELCA executives (along with some WWF staff) travelled to the Arnavon Islands to experience the conservation area for themselves and learn how the AMC was achieving its goals. Witnessing this success story proved to be an incredibly valuable experience for the GELCA executives, as they learned many lessons and received guidance on how they should proceed as a management committee. With a better understanding of what the role and responsibilities of GELCA would be, the group returned to Ghizo Island with a new found hope and confidence that they too could help Ghizo communities achieve successful conservation.

Community – protected area monitoring

It is important for stakeholders, especially communities, to have biological monitoring knowledge and skills so that they can monitor their MPAs and determine if management objectives are being achieved. As natural environments are constantly changing, it is possible that over time the management approach may also need to be modified. The results of monitoring and data collection will therefore help inform future management decisions.

Two training workshops have been conducted on biological monitoring, following the Solomon Islands Locally Managed Marine Areas Network (SILMMA) Standardized Monitoring Protocol. This protocol was developed so that any biological monitoring contributing to CBRM throughout the Solomon Islands is carried out in a consistent manner. Workshop participants included Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) staff, local NGO staff and members of MPA ‘guardian’ communities. Future community monitors were trained on how to successfully conduct a reef habitat underwater visual census, by monitoring coral, invertebrate and fish species distribution and abundance. Species identification and data collection techniques were practiced and the newly acquired monitoring skills were strengthened through hands-on exercises in the water.



Photos taken during a 4 day training workshop in Saeraghi, Ghizo Island.

Community – protected area management plan

As the proposed MPA sites around Ghizo Island will be amongst the first protected areas within Solomon Islands to be registered under the newly endorsed national Protected Areas Act (2010), there is a process that must be followed for MPA status to be ‘officially’ approved at the national level. Various resources and documents need to accompany an application, including a management plan for the proposed management site. Community involvement in preparing and developing the management plan is crucial, ensuring:

- ✎ that the management objectives of the protected area are understood and supported;
- ✎ current values and threats within the management area are accurately captured;
- ✎ management targets and actions are realistic and achievable;
- ✎ management committee roles and responsibilities are clear;
- ✎ community concerns and interests are considered;
- ✎ monitoring and enforcement objectives are obtainable; and
- ✎ the community feels a sense of ownership and pride over the management area.

Support through the David and Lucile Packard Foundation was utilized to create a ‘Protected Area Toolkit’, which hosts all the required resources for a community to successfully submit a Protected Areas application to the Solomon Island government. Two of the documents within the toolkit were developed under CTI-CFF through CTSP funding; *Guidelines and Information for Creating a Protected Area Management Plan in Solomon Islands* (Court, 2013a) and the *Protected Area Management Plan Template* (Court, 2013b). The goal was to develop user-friendly documents that can be completed by communities receiving minimal support. It is hoped that these documents will help secure community involvement in the management plan process, thus ensuring the establishment of successful management objectives, targets and actions for the MPA sites.



Governance

In addition to efforts made to develop and enhance management at the community level, efforts have been made to implement and strengthen both national and provincial policy and legislation pertaining to the marine environment. The Protected Area Toolkit provides an opportunity for communities to benefit from the new laws under the Protected Area Act, which advocates and enables protection of significant areas through a legal framework. The recently approved Western Province Fisheries Ordinance (2013) provides a new set of provincial legislation that, if adequately enforced, will support and promote the long term conservation, management and sustainable utilization of marine resources within Western Province. It should be noted that although WWF was involved in the establishment and passing of the Fisheries Ordinance, it was only through a supporting role as WorldFish took the lead on this activity.

Both national and provincial legislation is in now in place to help achieve the national goal of sustainably managing marine and coastal resources while ensuring food security, sustainable economic development, biodiversity conservation and adaptation to emerging threats through CBRM.



Next Steps

There is much work to be done in securing legal status for the MPA sites around Ghizo Island and in ensuring their long term functionality. Stakeholder efforts will need to be ongoing if MPAs are to achieve the intended management objectives. However, under CTI-CFF there are still some activities that need to be completed. Therefore, immediate next steps include:

- 1) The completion of Management Plan templates with communities and other stakeholders;
- 2) The development of appropriate maps to include with MPA application;
- 3) The installation of buoys to mark MPA boundaries (mooring equipment has arrived to Gizo);
- 4) GELCA capacity building;

- 5) The continued delivery of the education and awareness program; and
- 6) The continued monitoring of spawning aggregation sites.

The anticipated completion date for the above activities is September, 2013.



Challenges

Conservation encompasses a unique set of considerations in this region of the World. While challenges are expected in conservation work, they differ in complexity from place to place, and from project to project. The challenges encountered during the process of establishing a resilient MPA network in Western Province are likely quite different than those encountered elsewhere in the World, yet consistent with those encountered by others involved in conservation within Solomon Islands. In addition to challenges resulting from natural and practical limitations, there are many challenges to overcome as a result of the culture and lifestyles of Solomon Islanders.

The 2007 earthquake and tsunami occurred before CTI-CFF was initiated in Solomon Islands, and so it has been excluded from the below discussion. It should be kept in mind, however, that the natural environment can greatly influence the lives of Solomon Islanders, and thus the implementation and success of conservation efforts.

The following is a brief summary of the challenges encountered, to date, while engaged in MPA activities under CTI-CFF:

Traditional Resource Ownership

As resources are traditionally owned, that is they belong to a particular family, clan, village, or tribe, the management of natural resources in Solomon Islands requires the cooperation and support of the resource owner. Ownership disputes are common, making an already challenging task much more difficult. The following section elaborates on the difficulties associated with gaining the support and cooperation of resource owners, in a situation where ownership disputes are at a minimum.

Community Support

When developing partnerships with communities and attempting to gain support for various conservation initiatives, a tarnished reputation can be a great obstacle to overcome. Before any attempts can be made to gain support for conservation efforts, the involved parties must establish a good working relationship, the foundation of which is trust. Due to certain happenings in the past, where community expectations were not met, some communities lost trust and faith in the greater NGO community. It takes time and effort to reestablish relationships, as communities generally proceed with greater caution, but it is possible to gain back the required trust and, thus, support.

The other issue, when attempting to gain support, is one of perception; conservation may be viewed



negatively, due to the impact it could have on livelihoods. There is often a certain level of knowledge or understanding already within a community, with regards to the state of the environment. Fishermen, whose livelihoods depend on a daily catch, are well aware of whether or not fish abundance is in decline. Raising awareness is not the challenging part, gaining support for the conservation effort is. There is generally a fear that implemented conservation measures will negatively impact

livelihoods and it appears that the concept of sustainability, or long-term benefits, is not a priority. What happens today and tomorrow is most important. Depending on the proposed management activity, offering a livelihood alternative may be the only means of gaining community support. Regardless of the reason, there are always some community members more reluctant to support and participate in conservation projects. A strong leader within the community usually plays a key role in generating community support.

Community Politics and Organization

Community dynamics present many challenges and perhaps have the greatest influence on the success of CBRM efforts. Although many of the community aspects summarized here impact community support, they are presented under a different heading to better illustrate the importance of community dynamics in CBRM success, once community support has been ‘established’.

Around Ghizo Island, community dynamics are changing. Today, certain aspects of the community are becoming an obstacle in achieving successful CBRM. Perhaps most influential, is an apparent decrease in respect for the community’s elder, or leader. The relationship between younger generations and the community leader is not what it used to be in the past. This directly translates into a loss of community cohesiveness, which has been observed as well. Quite simply, the community bond is weaker than it used to be. The mentality within the community is changing and there is more of an ‘every man for himself’ attitude emerging. This does not bode well for community efforts to conserve the environment and sustain livelihoods. Once projects are underway, this new mentality allows for much intra-community conflict to arise, usually between family groups. Generally such conflict is the result of a perception that benefits are being realized by some more than others. It is becoming increasingly difficult to satisfy everyone within the community and, thus, avoid conflict.

It should be mentioned that these sorts of issues are not present in all communities. The community bond is still strong in my instances and community dynamics are conducive to successful CBRM. However, CBRM efforts can still be impacted by community politics. It is possible for other communities to feel left out or jealous and inter-community conflict can then become a reality. This, too, has been a challenge when trying to advance CBRM capacity around Ghizo Island.

Cost of Living

The cost of living is a factor driving the mentality change mentioned above. Even in remote villages the costs associated with daily life are high and hard to overcome. School fees are not cheap, petrol (for those with outboard motors) is quite expensive, and food costs add up quickly. A serious problem around Ghizo Island is the lack of income opportunities. One sure way of earning a living is to spend the days/nights fishing or harvesting other resources from the sea. Again, it is important for socio-economic issues to be addressed along with those regarding conservation and management. If no alternate livelihood opportunity exists, certain management actions will only encourage poaching.

Government Capacity

In the Western Province management attempts do not always receive required support from the national and provincial governments, especially in terms of legislation and policy enforcement. There are many reasons for this, including: lack of resources allocated to provincial departments, conflict of interest amongst government staff, traditional wantok systems, and lack of knowledge and skills amongst new staff. There are numerous factors hindering government capacity, and in instances when the capacity is there it is not utilized to its full potential. This will continue to be a challenge in the future, when the provincial government assumes the leading role in various management initiatives. The success of the projects will then depend, to a large extent, on government capacity and performance.

WWF Capacity

Efforts made by WWF to strengthen CBRM and establish a network of MPAs in Western Province has also been a challenge due to the organization's own capacity. During the same period of time that MPA activities were being conducted, there were numerous other projects ongoing as well. Multiple donors, with certain productivity expectations, meant that the small team (5 staff in Gizo, 1 in Honiara) was spread quite thin and forced to develop their 'multitasking' skills. Amongst the team there are areas of weakness and little support has been received to compensate for such limitations, particularly with regards to technical knowledge and skills. As a result, the team often had to focus on finding resources or people to help and lost much independence when engaged in certain tasks. And finally, these challenges were compounded by the practical and logistical hardships that are associated with conservation in a remote, diverse, and large area, such as the Western Province.

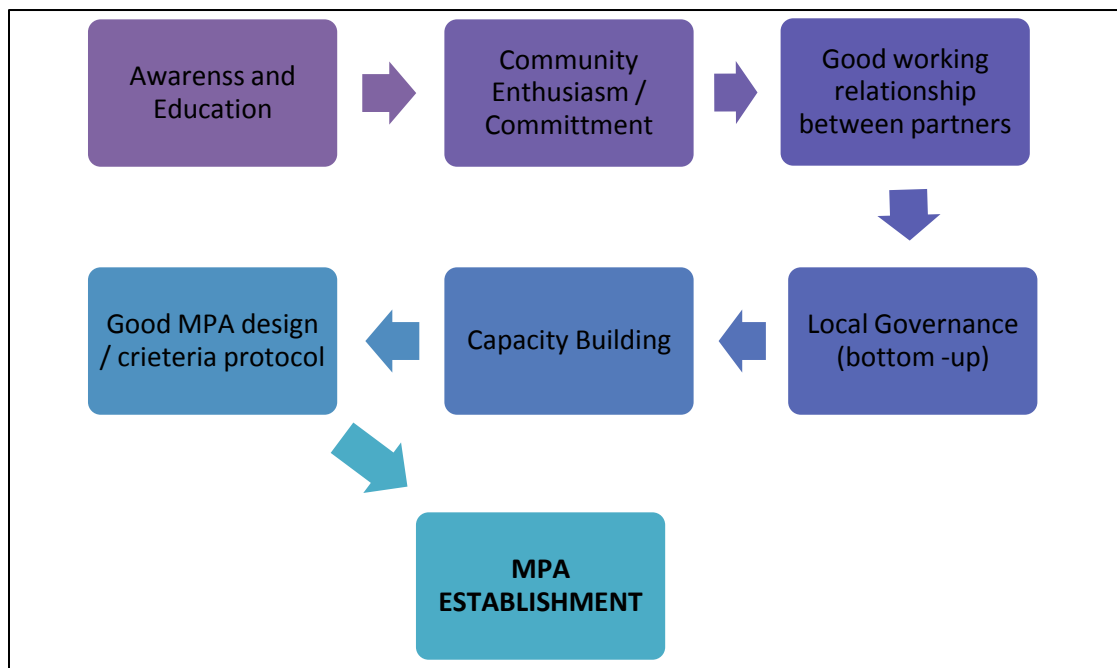
Funding

Although generous funding was provided through CTSP for supporting activities carried out under CTI-CFF, such funds were not always available in a timely manner. Delay or inconsistencies in fund availability made it challenging to implement or complete various activities.



Lessons Learned

Many lessons have been learnt, thus far in the process of establishing an MPA network in Western Province. They are presented here in a chronological order, of sorts, with the more meaningful lessons receiving greater thought and discussion. To begin, the following illustrations summarize what the successful design/establishment of an MPA entails, and what anticipated requirements are for the established MPA to be a success:



Since resources are traditionally owned in Solomon Islands, MPA efforts are best achieved through **community-based resource management** overseen by a local management committee. This **bottom-up approach** is essential to the success of management objectives: an MPA for the people, from the people, managed by the people. The community must be heavily involved in every step throughout the process. Community involvement is much more likely if they see the value in the management initiative. That is, if the area or resource to be impacted by management is valuable to them, or if an incentive has been provided for their cooperation. For example, the identified fish spawning aggregation sites were all incorporated into MPA sites. The communities understand the importance of protecting the foundation of their food supply. Otherwise, conservation is more likely to interfere with livelihoods and, therefore, receives little attention as people go about living their lives.

It is incredibly important to make every attempt to avoid **unrealistic community expectations**. Mainly this can be achieved through ongoing consultations and an effective education and awareness program, but it is a great challenge. If communication between partners is not clear, the community may expect results from implemented activities that do not materialize. The community may also have high expectations regarding the role of the partner and, if these roles and responsibilities are not satisfied, could lead to distrust and a broken working relationship. This is most often seen when the community is engaged in capacity building workshops or in monitoring activities. Basically any time spent away from the family (or community) on tasks that do not immediately benefit the family (or community) is considered a loss. Thus, when engaged in training, monitoring or other resource management activities, there is often an expectation for compensation. Participants expect to receive something in return, immediately, for their time and effort. High expectations present an obstacle and inevitably result in unsuccessful CBRM.

An **effective education and awareness program** does much more than ensure that community expectations are realistic. It cannot be emphasized enough how important this aspect of the conservation project is when working with communities to achieve various management goals. The education and awareness program obviously helps to raise awareness of the state of the environment and of possible ways to sustain livelihoods while engaged in conservation, but it does far more than this. Community ‘education and awareness sessions’ proved to be incredibly useful and valuable in gaining community support and cooperation and in providing an informal setting for discussions and information sharing. The sessions also allowed community dynamics, including organization and capacity, to be assessed.

As mentioned under the *Challenges* section of this report, it has been observed that **community dynamics** are not what they used to be. Trust and respect for elders/leaders is no longer guaranteed, dishonesty amongst community elders/leaders can be an issue, communal spirit is often weak, volunteer work within the community is no longer easy to come by and the well being of individuals or family units is more important than the well being of the community as a whole. These changes greatly impact the success of CBRM in many ways and, as a result, an incentive is often required to achieve any level of productivity.

It is apparent that the concept of **sustainability and long-term benefits** is not a high priority amongst Ghizo Island communities. While there are community members around the Island concerned about

the future health of the marine environment and what it means for food security and sustained livelihoods, these people do not make up the majority and this concern does not necessarily translate into action. The reality of the situation is that livelihoods need to be made, families need food and there are more important things to do **now** than plan for future benefits that may not reach those initially impacted. This outlook can be linked back to the expectation that efforts will result in an immediate, tangible benefit.

Community **capacity building** and the execution of a well thought out **exit strategy** are both requirements for achieving successful CBRM. As much as possible, community dependency on partners needs to be minimized. In order to establish self-sufficiency and CBRM capacity within a community, much time and effort needs to be spent working with the communities and in establishing strong, well organized local management bodies. It is very common for projects and management efforts to collapse when the NGO or outside partner pulls away from the project, leaving the local government or community to assume the leading role. The best way to reduce this risk is to provide the communities with required skills and knowledge for the successful completion and maintenance of ongoing projects. This is not easy, especially if government capacity is lacking and the communities receive no support, but attempts to do this are most important and this should be a priority area for funding.

The CTSP report, *Biophysical principles for designing resilient networks of marine protected areas to integrate fisheries, biodiversity and climate change objectives in the Coral Triangle* (Fernades et al. 2012), highlights the protocol to follow for establishing a successful MPA in this region of the world. The biophysical principles presented in the report are meant to help nearshore marine protected area networks achieve fisheries sustainability, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change, while complementing human uses and values. While MPA efforts have been made in accordance with the principles and protocol set out in this document, as best as possible, they also incorporate sustainable economic development and alternate livelihood objectives as well. One criticism that was heard more than once is that WWF appears to **care more about the environment than the people** living within it. While some might argue that this is a misunderstanding, or simply a matter of opinion, it is still a criticism that cannot be ignored. Future conservation efforts should keep this in mind and take care to ensure that proposed management activities, above all else, are aiming to conserve the required resources for Solomon Islanders to live as they have for thousands of years...off the biodiversity and richness of the sea.



Acknowledgements

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