

Social Assessment – Indigenous Peoples

Capacity Building and Training Course on Conservation Management of Giant Clams to Sustain Livelihoods for Communities of the Rambutso Island, Manus Province, Papua New Guinea.

The University of Papua New Guinea

i. Indigenous Peoples of the Project Area

The overall goal of the project was to work within the bounds of the Rapatona Local-Level Government (LLG) initially and then extended the other LLGs in the Manus Province. The major islands of the Rapatona LLG included the Pak, Tong, the Los Reys group, part of the Tilienu Atolls, the Loamat and Bundrou complex, Rambutso and Nauna.

The Rambutso Island priority area in this initiative included a complex of four main coral atolls (~388 ha) immediately north of the main Rambutso island with adjacent reef areas of some 2,154 ha as the Loamat-Bundrou group, the main Rambutso Island (>9,679 ha) with a reef cover of about 3,813 ha, and the outlying Tilienu Atoll group (~13.3 ha) and their reefs with some 913 ha west of Rambutso. The main bathymetry depths of the project area ranged from 200m to 1,000m and thence into the deep waters.

The indigenous Rambutso Island peoples comprised part of the greater seafaring Titan Language Group or Tribe along the south coast of the Manus Island. Their form of traditional governance was basically patrilineal and functioned through the clan system.

Loamat-Bundrou Atoll Group

The populations in the following villages were Popeu with 140, Loamat with 82 and Bundrou with 137. The vegetation of the Loamat-Bundrou Atoll group had been significantly modified by human activities over time with the notable extensive coconut plantations for the copra production. The plantations were developed during the colonial period and that one of the main result was the import of migrant plantation workers particularly from the East Sepik Province. There have been intermarriages between the migrant workers and the indigenous peoples and the current composition of the population from this social interaction has been significant. There was a Primary School at Loamat. The communities were heavily reliant on the marine resources for their livelihoods and have been involved in the modern economy. There were two community-based trusts, the Loamat and Bundrou Asi Trusts which were established and assumed the early initiatives on marine conservation, mangrove and fisheries management. Over the last 5 five years there have been successes on recovery of populations of some fin-fish species, and protection of mangroves to control coastal erosion. The respective heads of the Trusts were also the clan leaders and held the principal decision-making powers.

Rambutso Island

The populations of the main villages were Liuliu (203), Kuluoh (232), Paniselu (299), Kup Local-Level Government Station (21), Penchal (388), Pusu (43), Lengkau (300) and Lengandrowa (296). There were two Primary Schools, one at Penchal and the other was the Mouklen Primary School. The main Rambutso Island was of raised coral reefs and back coral plains while the central portion eastwards was characterized by mountains and hills with weak or no structural control. The relief was from 10-30m. The vegetation was of primarily woodland on permanently dry to periodically inundated terrain with the tree canopy being low and open, but the shrub form was of lowland hill forest, dry evergreen forest, or littoral forest. Some of the common tree species included *Acacia* beach woodland, *Callophyllum inophyllum*, *Barringtonia asiatica*, *Terminalia catappa* and *Pandanus tectorius*. The communities were also reliant on subsistence fisheries which formed also the basis of their income earning opportunities. There was only one community-based Trust established at Pusu, the Pusu Asi Trust. The Trust was relatively new and hence was in partnership with the Loamat-Bundrou Asi Trusts for support to develop its community development and conservation initiatives. The head of the Trust was also the head of the clan.

Tilienu Atolls

The Tilienu Atolls showed a population of only 32 persons. The land-based resources there had been extensively modified. The communities were also reliant on marine resources for their subsistence livelihoods and income earning opportunities.

ii. Expected Project Impacts

Positive

The overall planned project activities were conducted in two phases. The first was an awareness campaign to seek a FPIC for the main part – the training course. This was undertaken for a week from 20-28 February 2015. The second phase was the training course and was conducted for two weeks from 25 July to 5 August 2015. Within these respective periods some \$US6,800 was directly disbursed within the communities (refer Summary Financial Report) for their varied services and support to the project. This was almost half of the total expenditures (\$US18,400). These included food and water supplies, cooking, accommodation, electricity through gensets and hiring of boats, and honorariums for accessing traditional and local experts to partake in training sessions and in the field. This created an opportunity for the local community to earn some income. The income derived catered for some of the basic household items ranging from store goods, lighting (eg. batteries), transportation (eg. dinghy) fees, school supplies and project fees, clothing or fuel and fishing gear.

The short-term income noted above was directly connected to the public awareness and education for the local communities on the plight of the marine environment and resources with reference to the giant clam conservation management project initiative. This was particularly valuable for the young adults and school children as the next generation of community movers and leaders. Part of the public awareness and education was reinforced by the training program. The relevant training resource materials were also provided to the three primary schools and the 76 course trainees were recipients of the course materials.

The information generated from the training program has enhanced the marine and island resource management processes and decision making, and enforcement of decisions made. This has enabled the communities to design an appropriate marine conservation management regime(s) to protect, and the sustainable use of their giant clam resources. Under this context the project has drawn attention to other endemic-threatened populations, species and ecosystems for relevant actions. With the basic impacts as noted above the availability of the giant clams to the local communities and especially the disadvantaged group were to identify their needs to improve their livelihoods through subsistence fisheries and/or be involved in a proper designed giant clam fishery.

The project has also raised awareness and understanding of the communities to participate meaningfully with different partners and stakeholders. These included the alliance with the UPNG, IUCN, the CEPF and other Manus CBOs, NGOs, the Provincial Government and the National Government. A rapid interest on this has been the securing of financial resources (PGK20,000) early this month from the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology through its Office of Research, Science and Technology Secretariat to address marine food resources and climate change (sea-level rise and food security) for highly threatened vulnerable island communities in PNG.

The other positive aspect of the training program was awarding of the UPNG certificate of attainment for the 76 participants in the training program. The initial planned trainees number was 36, this was surpassed by a 100% increase.

Negative

Given that the project duration was for only a relatively short period of time – total of three weeks - there were no significant adverse impacts from the Project. The major issue was the deferral of the training course program twice in the Second Quarter to finally being conducted in the Third Quarter. Although the training course hosts, the Liuliu Villagers, were disappointed, the host organizing committee was able to

contain the disappointment and professionally supported the training course program to its successful conclusion.

iii. Consultations with Affected Communities

Although there was inadequate funding to conduct regular consultations with the communities on the project since March 2012, the communities of Rambutso Island have shown patience and commitment especially in 2015 for the successful implementation of the planned activities on the ground.

iv. Measures to Avoid Adverse Impacts and provide Culturally Appropriate Benefits

The 2012 consultation reports underlined the dire status of many populations, species and ecosystems which were over harvested, degraded or modified. This prompted local community actions to address the wide array of issues over the years with limited success due to inadequate financial resources and technical assistance. The CEPF intervention was timely and the catalyst in support of the Rambutso peoples' desire to properly undertake marine conservation with attention to species of importance to their livelihoods and local economy. Some of the threatened or over harvested species also on a regional basis included the sago, mangroves, honey bees, cone shells, trochus, sea cucumbers, giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*, *T. squamosa*), corals (soft and hard) and coral reef fishes.

The linkage of the peoples' expectations on marine conservation and local development was for the Rapatona Rural Local-Level Government and the Manus Provincial Assembly to enact relevant laws on the environment and related biodiversity conservation, and cultural matters. These laws-making powers have not been applied at Rambutso Island. That is, biodiversity conservation or for that matter protected areas have not been imposed. In view of this there were no protected areas established in the project's priority area under any of the PNG laws, except the custodianship provided for by the national law on trusts and deeds, and those under the informal or traditional-customary protected sites (eg. spirit or ritual sites). The current three Trusts were bound by a Deed of Settlement with the Rapatona Rural Local-Level Government in which the latter was the settlor. This broad design was a practical measure to dovetail traditional and modern governance for the peoples' long term security.

In addition an invitation for the project training program was extended to local CBOs, NGOs and Provincial Government officials. Given the deferral of the training dates most of the invited organizations could not attend. The Provincial Government officials and a technical officer from WCS participated in the training course. With these initial contacts a networking of organizations and friends was developed to review different interventions on Rambutso Island and the Manus Province for avoidance of un-necessary duplications of efforts and support to future endeavors by the Rambutso communities on much larger project interventions.

There was immense value in Prof Chalapan Kaluwin, Selan Pranis, Leman Polau, Kisokiu Posman, Selan Paulius for their various modes of support in the implementation of the project. Being as leaders themselves and indigenous persons they conversed in their Titan language and local dialects fluently to iron out any issues on misinformation and translation. The UPNG staff involved communicated effectively in the three official languages of PNG (English, Pidgin English and Police Motu). The literacy level of the Rambutso peoples was relatively higher than most of the Provinces in PNG and there was a good percentage of well-educated persons within the villages and the churches who were always prepared to help and support.

v. Monitoring of Measures

The general measures outlined were monitored through different modes and included the formal community meetings, the use of appropriate questionnaires to gauge the community responses on the strengths and weaknesses of the training program and its future version(s). The feedbacks were conducted before and after the training program by the trainer(s). The basic format and contents of the questionnaires were developed at Rambutso just prior to the commencement of the training program. It

was noted also that the monitoring process did not compromise the already established processes as it was not counter-productive during the implementation for the project within the given three-week period.

vi. Grievance Mechanism

It was noted that there were established processes within Rambutso communities which dealt with various grievances and how they were resolved. The project did not interfere with these processes but incorporated appropriate mechanisms to deal with project issues.

In general, any person(s) with a grievance(s) informed any of their community leaders, the Ward Councilor and/or any of the Heads of the Trusts. They invoked their community dispute resolution processes which included consultation with the respective Chiefs. The Chief's decisions were normally regarded as final. The issues raised at community meetings by the local communities or by other groups were taken note of by the UPNG project team and the Village/Community meeting note taker(s). In the case of UPNG project team not present the issues conveyed to UPNG at Port Moresby. Given that the two weeks training program was very specific and of short duration any grievances raised were resolved during the said period(s).

In the case of post training and for future issues the local communities were provided with contact details of the UPNG project team (Prof. Chalapan Kaluwin and John Genolagani) and the IUCN as the Regional Implementation Team (including the National Country Coordinator). This enabled an alternate option for Rambutso communities to air their grievances to a third party if there were pertinent or prevalent issues against the project. Any grievances raised with the project team or third-party were communicated to the CEPF Regional Implementation Team at IUCN within 15 days, together with a plan for remedial action (if any required). The Regional Implementation Team was contacted via email on cepfeastmelanesia@iucn.org or via post on c/- CEPF Regional Implementation Team, PMB 5 Ma'afu St, Suva, Fiji.

Map of Project Area

A selection of maps in relation to the project site and nearby communities of the Rambutso Island priority area.



