



WORKSHOP ON LOCAL ACTION,
GLOBAL CONTRIBUTION: BEST
PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY-BASED
APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE
COASTAL AND MARINE
ECOSYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

23 November 2009



GEF Small Grants Programme

The East Asian Seas Congress 2009

**“Partnerships at Work: Local Implementation
and Good Practices”**

Manila, Philippines

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**Workshop on
Local Action, Global Contribution: Best Practices in Community-based
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Co-Convening Agency:
GEF Small Grants Programme

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

Communities have proven to be an effective force of change. While local actions may seem to have minimal, isolated impacts, the changes at the local or community level are usually those that make significant and visible impacts on people's lives and communities.

As one of the primary stakeholders who have interests and are dependent on coastal resources and the environment, the role of the communities and their participation, in partnership with other stakeholders, in coastal development and management is essential.

Efforts are underway in promoting the participation of community-based groups not only in projects and programs related to sustainable coastal and marine ecosystems management but also in decision-making processes for aspects of the environment that affect their lives.

The Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme, since its launch in 1992, has been supporting communities in developing countries around the world in their efforts to achieve more sustainable livelihoods and contribute to achieving global environmental targets. Community-based projects cover the main focal areas such as climate change abatement and adaptation, conservation of biodiversity, protection of international waters, reduction of the impact of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and prevention of land degradation.

Best practices in community-based approaches to sustainable coastal and marine ecosystems management are emerging. Case studies from East Asia are highlighted in this report showcasing how the local communities in the region have been a rich source of creative and productive experiences in managing coastal and marine ecosystems. The case models have been chosen from a number of projects implemented by community-based organizations, people's organizations and other community constituents within the SGP Country Programmes in the East Asian Seas region. While these initiatives were directed to

contribute to global environmental benefits, they help, more importantly, in uplifting the communities' economic and social wellbeing.

CONTRIBUTING TO GLOBAL TARGETS

Various countries in the East Asian Region share similar environmental challenges and management issues that beset their coastal and marine environment. These include habitat destruction and overexploitation of coastal and marine resources, multiple use conflicts, pollution, limited technical and management capacity and weak law enforcement. Most countries in the region are also characterized by a large proportion of coastal communities that are dependent on coastal resources such as fisheries for livelihood and sustenance. Small-scale fishers, in particular, usually suffer from the impacts of environmental degradation, while, at the same time, exacerbate further degradation by putting pressure on the already fragile coastal ecosystems.

Coastal communities along with the other stakeholders share the responsibility for environmental protection and management. Organized community groups have been playing key roles in the management of the coastal resources. Although issues that affect the sustainability of coastal areas cross sectoral boundaries, localized achievements can serve as catalysts for scaling up of best practices to cover wider areas and thus contributing more effectively to global targets.

Best Practices in Community-based Approaches to Sustainable Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management

Community-based initiatives from five countries in East Asia are presented in this report. The initiatives from Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam employed various strategies and modalities aimed at conserving and protecting coastal habitats and marine resources, promoting their sustainable use, restoring and rehabilitating damaged ecosystems, and reducing pollution among others, with the ultimate goal of improving the social and economic status of the coastal communities.

Coastal resource management in Stung Hav, Preah Sihanouk, Cambodia

The challenges encountered in the coastal areas of Stung Hav District, Sihanoukville Province have prompted the initiation of community-based projects with the active involvement of the local communities. The creation of the Coastal Community Fisheries Committee has provided the necessary institutional mechanism for the integration and coordination of the activities of the coastal communities, which initially focused on sustainable and responsible fishery management and later on expanded to cover water use and supply management and reservoir utilization and management. With the aim of rehabilitating and managing in a sustainable manner, the coastal resources and environment, and improving the quality of life, the communities were enjoined in supporting and taking active part in project implementation and derive benefits from the process. The key outputs of the project are presented in Box 1.

After four years of implementation, significant improvements have been noted, including increase in fish catch from 5-7 kg/person to 7-10 kg/person and increase in household income from alternative income generation programs. Since 80 percent of the villagers are members of the Coastal Community Fishery Committee where the involvement of women is significant, this has facilitated good cooperation among them as well as other

stakeholders. Public awareness and capacity enhancement are continuing efforts to ensure that the coastal communities are able to sustain the initiatives.

What stood out in the initiative is the strengthening of the institutional mechanism at the community level and the successful integration of conservation and livelihood components. Future thrusts would include coordination and cooperation with other sectors including the government, local authorities and the business sector since the issues confronting Stung Hav District cannot be solved by the communities alone.

Box 1. Outputs of the community-based projects implemented in Stung Hav District, Preah Sihanouk from 2006-2009.

Sustainable Coastal Resource Management (2006-2007)

- 184,000 mangrove seedlings planted covering 18 ha; rehabilitation efforts widely participated by students, teachers, local authorities and community members
- 50 concrete artificial reefs established
- 14 Women Savings Group established and provided revolving funds for small businesses and participation in other alternative income generation programs
- 3 coastal community fisheries committees established
- 33 volunteer members from each community fisheries committees participated in regular patrolling and surveillance activities

Water for Life (2007-2008)

- 5.97 ha of freshwater reservoir reconstructed
- 296 ceramic water purifiers distributed

Reservoir Utilization and Community-based Sustainable Ecotourism Development (2008-2009)

- Reservoir wall restored
- Reservoir regulation and management group established
- Livelihood programs established
- Drop-in Buy-back Center established for solid waste management
- Wastewater garden established

Coral reef restoration in Belitung Island, Indonesia

The Coral Reef Restoration Program in Tanjung Binga Village in Belitung Island, Indonesia, capitalized on the notion that the local communities will actively participate in the conservation efforts if they will derive economic benefits from the program. A strategy was adopted where local communities were extensively involved in program planning and implementation and in the process, the communities developed a sense of ownership and responsibility over the program.



Four key complementary strategies were adopted. These include putting alternative livelihood options such as community-based ornamental fish trading and ecotourism activities as the flagship programs to enhance the economic status of the communities; involving the communities in all aspects of the program planning and implementation; creating synergy among the various players and stakeholders and involving them in the rehabilitation efforts; and enacting supporting legislations and regulations.

The challenge of changing the mindset of the stakeholders remains. The perceived outcomes of the project such as improvements in the economic living standard of the local communities as well as improvements in environmental quality are anticipated to encourage greater participation of the local communities and sustain the initiative.

Marine sanctuary management in Roxas, Palawan, Philippines

The decline in fish catch from 40 kg in the 1970s to 3-5 kg in the early 2000 in the coastal waters of Caramay in Roxas, Palawan, Philippines, was attributed to the destruction of marine ecosystems by illegal fishing activities and intrusion of commercial fishers in the municipal waters. Establishing a marine sanctuary where certain areas of the coastal waters are protected and the local fisherfolks were granted the responsibility to manage the protected area was seen as a plausible solution to the problem.

The project aimed at reducing, if not totally eradicating, the incidence of illegal fishing through surveillance, monitoring and patrolling activities, including the deputization of fish wardens and income generation through the development and implementation of alternative livelihood programs.

The establishment of the marine sanctuary is packaged with complementary activities, including habitat conservation and management, patrolling and law enforcement, capacity building and strengthening, public awareness and education campaigns and livelihood support program. Additional support was secured from the Philippine-Australian Community Assistance Program for the development and implementation of livelihood support programs in the form of fish culture, ecotourism and microfinancing.

One of the key achievements of the program is the expansion of the original 50-ha protected area into 1,123 ha that included portions of seagrass beds and mangrove areas that are beyond the jurisdiction of Caramay. The fisherfolk organization has also transformed into a multipurpose cooperative. These achievements catalyzed support and participation from national and local agencies, NGOs and donor organizations. The challenge to the program is how to effectively disseminate the best practices and their eventual replication to cover a wider geographic area.

Income generation through sustainable use of marine resources in Chaolao Bay, Chantaburi Province, Thailand

The productivity of Chaolao Bay in Chantaburi Province, Thailand, is also experiencing a decline similar to the situation in Roxas City, Palawan, due to destructive fishing activities, which threaten the livelihood of the coastal communities. Among the occupations in the Province, small-scale fishery is considered among the lowest in terms of income. Income generation is therefore essential to uplift the economic status of the coastal communities.

Five coastal villages, consisting of 250 families and where 47 families are directly



Municipal Resolution No. 126, S 2004.
Establishing a 50-ha marine sanctuary in
Caramay and appropriation of funds.



involved in small-scale fishery, were targeted for the program. Three innovative environment-friendly approaches to income generation were adopted, i.e., culture of blue swimming crabs in crab houses, facilitating natural growth of by-products such as small mussels and other mollusks that attach in the crab houses, and habitat enhancement using artificial reefs. These activities have generated positive results including an estimated increase in crab population from 30 to 40 percent, the by-products collected from the crab houses were used in the lunch program for community schools and traditional events, and more importantly, there is a reported increase in the income of the fishing communities from US\$ 6 to US\$ 9/day/person.

Other conservation activities are also being undertaken, including mangrove reforestation, monitoring of the status of coral reefs and seagrasses, surveillance against illegal fishing and reaching out to nearby inland villages to address soil erosion that is affecting the Bay. Support from the Burapha University and the Department of Marine and Coastal Resources come in the form of capacity building for the local communities.

Linking MPA management with integrated coastal management (ICM) in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam

Quang Nam Province in Vietnam has been implementing an ICM program since 2004; a year after the Cu Lao Cham Islands was officially designated as a marine protected area (MPA). To support the goals of the MPA which focus on biodiversity conservation and community livelihood improvement, the following activities are in place: (1) capacity building on biodiversity assessment, zoning plan development, sustainable tourism and environmental education, and English language program; (2) public awareness program and participatory management; (3) monitoring and evaluation; (4) livelihood improvement programs and alternative income generation; and (5) community-based law enforcement and surveillance.

After six years of management, the Cu Lao Cham MPA stands out for the following reasons: (a) presence of an efficient coordinating mechanism (e.g., MPA Management Board); (b) the local government is providing counterpart funding to support the day-to-day operation of the Visitor Center and the Management Team after donor support ended in 2006; (c) a user fee system is in place where 60 percent of the revenues is used to maintain the Visitor Center and partly to support the Management Team while 40 percent is used for community development; and (d) there is strong involvement of the local communities in the management of the MPA, particularly in patrolling the core zones of the MPA.



In view of the transboundary concerns that impact the MPA, the need to link its management under the broader framework of the ICM program of the Province was recognized. Efforts are underway to harmonize the governance mechanism of the MPA with that of the ICM program. The long-term protection and conservation of the MPA is also supported by the fact that two adjacent sites, i.e., Danang and Thua Thien Hue are implementing ICM programs and thus, knowledge transfer among and between the sites can be facilitated.

COMMON ISSUES, APPROACHES AND LOCAL ACTIONS

The case studies presented provided insights on the various approaches and strategies that were adopted in addressing common management issues and challenges to sustainable development at the community level. They also provided insights on the best practices that are reflective of local actions that other potential sites and community-based groups can emulate.

The key elements toward successful community-based projects include:

- a. Engaging the communities in projects that significantly improve their wellbeing and quality of life ensures their support and ownership of the project.
- b. Effective conservation programs should combine alternative livelihood interventions, appropriate technology and good governance in the design.
- c. Building capacity, partnerships and close coordination with relevant stakeholders for mobilizing additional resources and continuous support contributes to project success as the communities cannot address these concerns singlehandedly.
- d. Institutionalizing and mainstreaming community-based mechanisms at the policy/regulatory and governance levels contributes to sustaining the gains from the projects.
- e. Measures such as evaluating the capacity of communities in selecting them for support, participatory approaches to data gathering, platform for information exchange and progress/impacts monitoring should be part of project management strategies which can ensure sustainability.

In order to further improve the performance of community-based programs, the following issues are worth considering: (a) replication of successful projects in other areas for greater impact; (b) expanding partnerships and networking with relevant sectors to support existing efforts as well as initiating other activities that would contribute to global environmental benefits while uplifting the communities economic and social wellbeing; and (c) linking the community-based programs within a broader management framework, such as ICM to address transboundary concerns that may affect the integrity of the coastal areas.