

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR MARINE PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF THE UNEP – CEP TRAINING OF TRAINERS PROGRAMME

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Background

Coral Reefs are fragile ecosystems of critical importance to the marine environment and to the economies of most countries of the Wider Caribbean Region. In many parts of the region, however, coral reefs are severely damaged or are in danger of being lost due to pollution (including sewage and sedimentation), destruction and overfishing. The establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs) has been one of the major action by countries of the region to assist with the conservation of these fragile and economically important ecosystems. However, most of these areas lacked adequate management and thus were not meeting the objectives for which they were originally established.

One of the most important reasons for this management failure in the MPAs has been the lack of qualified personnel and financial resources. In the past, although some training has been made available for MPA managers of the region it has been thematic, infrequent and short-term. In addition, the trained and most qualified managers often leave the MPA in search of better opportunities and salaries, and in so doing, carry with them their skills and knowledge.

This issue, of lack of capacity of MPA managers was further highlighted at the International Workshop on Framework for Future Training in Marine and Coastal Protected Area Management organized by the Netherlands-based Coastal Zone Management Centre (CZMC) in 1997 and held in Manila, Phillippines. The need for training of trainers and the development of training modules for MPA training was strongly endorsed by the participants.

To address this issue of lack of capacity, UNEP-CAR/RCU launched a “Training of Trainers” programme for MPA managers, through which managers are not only trained in all aspects of MPA management but also on adult education techniques to conduct local and tailored training activities in their respective MPAs. This approach includes regional two week courses, followed by local training activities which the trained managers are committed to undertake upon completing the regional courses. Development of the course modules and manual was primarily supported by the Netherlands Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Management under the Netherlands Government Programme through its CZMC to support the implementation of the Action Programme of the Jakarta Mandate of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Additionally, support for implementation of the programme was also provided by World

Bank, the US Government, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the UN Foundation through the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN).

The ICRAN partnership facilitated by UNEP and funded primarily by the UN Foundation/UNFIP aims to address the global decline of coral reefs through strategic partnerships and a number of on the ground activities including the promotion of best practices. In this context ICRAN identified the “Training of Trainers” programme for MPAs as a critical contribution for sustainable management of coral reefs in the Wider Caribbean and has contributed to its initial development and launching.

The Training of Trainers Programme

The Programme included the development of a course manual and modules in MPA management on the basis of a regional needs assessment undertaken within the Wider Caribbean by UNEP during 1998. The CZMC provided financial support for the manual and an Experts Meeting in December 1998, in which the course design was finalized.

The specific subject areas covered by the training manual are as follows:

- Module 1: Training and Communication Skills
- Module 2: The Nature of the Marine Environment
- Module 3: Uses and Threats to the Marine Environment and its Resources
- Module 4: Marine Protected Areas Overview
- Module 5: Participatory Planning
- Module 6: Marine Protected Area Planning
- Module 7: Marine Protected Area Management
- Module 8: Research and Monitoring

Since the inception of the Training of Trainers” programme, there have been three regional courses. The first was conducted on 2-13 November 1999 in Saba, Netherlands Antilles, for the English-speaking Caribbean in which 10 MPA Managers were trained, and who subsequently organized local training activities within their respective MPAs, benefiting a total of 121 MPA staff and practitioners at the local level. The second regional course was held in Bayahibe, Dominican Republic, 1-13 May 2000 where 15 Spanish-speaking Caribbean MPA Managers were trained, who subsequently trained 126 MPA and coastal zone practitioners. Most recently, a third course was held in Soufriere, Saint Lucia, 27 October-10 November 2002, for 12 MPA Managers who are finalizing their proposals to conduct follow up training in their respective MPAs.

Course Objectives

The goal of the Training of Trainers programme is to build a cadre of MPA managers in the Wider Caribbean who are able to design and deliver quality training activities at the local level that will result ultimately in improved MPA management throughout the region.

The specific objectives of the Course were:

- To introduce MPA managers to the theory of adult education and relevant teaching methods;
- To provide participants with additional knowledge, skills, materials, and information to improve MPA management in their own countries; and
- To stimulate the exchange of information and experiences, as well as communication among trainees, trainers and MPAs

Following from the regional training courses, participating countries were assisted to implement local and customised training activities within their MPAs. The trained managers who attended the regional courses were responsible for the implementation of the local courses. A total of 11 local training courses have been undertaken to date.

There was an assessment of the impact of the training programme with technical assistance from The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and priority areas were identified for further assistance for the Training of Trainers Programme.

Expected Results

Expected results include:

- A Train the Trainers Course Manual and Modules, including CD-ROM in both English and Spanish will assist in replication of the training sessions undertaken at the local level;
- An increase in the number of trained trainers (MPA managers) with skills in management, planning, training and communication;
- An increase in the number of trained MPA staff in general, trained by the trained trainers;
- A widely disseminated analysis of successful approaches to Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) and the management of MPAs which will function as a basis for developing guidelines for other MPAs within the region. Through this process MPA managers and other coral reef stakeholders will be sensitised and have an improved awareness and knowledge of MPA management;
- A report on the assessment of the impact of the training programme; and
- Recommendations for further assistance.

These results will assist participating countries, which are dependent on their coastal and marine resources to attract tourism, including diving, to manage their resources in a sustainable manner through the MPAs and through co-management arrangements and participatory planning. The training programme has also resulted in sustainable and direct skills increases in MPA managers and their staff, which will be used to train other personnel in the project area resulting in higher capacities throughout the WCR. The comprehensive training manual developed under this initiative includes theory of MPA management, practical exercises and reference materials and has been successfully used

by the participating MPAs through their local activities (as stated above). The training manual is unique and effective and is available for use in other parts of the world.

Problems and Challenges

A key issue to the timely execution of the programme was the very slow and inadequate response from some of the MPA managers who had attended the regional training workshops to comply with the commitment to develop and undertake local training activities. This resulted in delays in the implementation of training courses at the local level and had a negative impact on the project as a whole. UNEP-CAR/RCU was proactive in offering assistance and additional time for the preparation of training proposals. Also, participants in the third course were required to finalize draft proposals before the end of the course, in an effort to speed up the process for the local training exercises. Although additional grants were provided during the course of the project, these took significant amounts of time to be presented and were followed up only after repeated requests from UNEP. The lack of response had an impact on the timely meeting of the objectives of the initiative.

A key lesson learnt during the implementation of the programme, was that the original timetable and workplan was too ambitious, requiring the agreement of project extensions. In future, similar activities will need to have a more realistic timetable which takes into account the limited resources and capacities of the participating MPAs and countries. This issue limited the MPAs ability to have fully active and productive participation in the project activities. The majority of MPAs had limited staff with the necessary management skills to participate, resulting in limited time and resources for the additional work of training. It is critical not to attempt to accomplish too much which will effectively sacrifice the quality and the real benefits of the project outputs. In addition, despite the selection criteria used to determine the most appropriate participants, the process was insufficient in securing committed candidates for participation in the training courses. Future initiatives will require more cautious and considered selection processes.

Stakeholder Participation

The programme had a strong element of stakeholder participation. The training courses at the regional level were provided for the purpose of training MPA managers and/or senior MPA staff as the key stakeholders in the planning of MPAs, in addition, the trained managers went on to provide training for other staff of the MPAs, thus sharing their knowledge with other stakeholders. The use of a regional partner, The Nature Conservancy, assisted in assuring the needs of regional stakeholders were met.

In addition to the MPA managers, a number of other stakeholders were trained, such as Dive Site Operators and those whose economic interests are dependent on effective coastal and marine planning and management.

The project did not include a public awareness component, but was limited to raising awareness and capacity amongst the direct stakeholders. However, it is assumed that there will be a long-term impact, since the trained staff of the MPAs themselves, will provide information and awareness-raising to the general public as part of the effective management of the MPAs.

Self Assessment of Success

The objectives of the programme were all realised as follows: two regional workshops were undertaken and a training manual and CD-Rom developed in Spanish and English (see above); grants were provided for the provision of local training activities, and follow up training activities were undertaken in 12 participating countries.

The results were measured in terms of the increase in awareness amongst MPA staff and other stakeholders about the existing MPA training programmes and the needs of MPAs. This was evidenced through the increase in the number of requests for information on MPAs received by CAR-RCU following the training initiatives. The regional and local training course were analysed and evaluated by both participants and the course instructors to measure their success and weaknesses. In addition, TNC undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the courses held in Spanish Speaking countries to assess their impact.

The initiative has had a sustainable impact on the capacity of MPA staff throughout the Caribbean. The follow-up training courses provide an effective indicator of the success of the capacity building activities. In turn, this increased capacity will have a positive impact on the decision-making process within the MPAs of the region. Improved management and planning skills, learned through the training courses will contribute towards the long-term sustainability of the initiative.

Recommendations

After organizing three regional training courses and providing support for the local training exercises a number of recommendations are as follows:

1. The initiative is replicable throughout the WCR and the world, using materials and lessons learnt from the initial training courses. In addition, the comprehensive training manual, which is the only one of its kind, can be used in other regions of the world to assist in designing their own initiatives for MPAs.
2. Periodic reviews of the training manual is necessary to ensure that information imparted to the participants are current. The relevant facilitator for a specific module will have a role to play in the review process.
3. The Training of Trainers Programme should be expanded to include other coastal zone practitioners and also MPA Managers from other regions of the world who have expressed an interest in participating.

4. A comprehensive evaluation of the Training of Trainers Programme needs to be done to document the extent of the positive impact this initiative has had on the region.