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## Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification through the Coral Reefs and Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI)

The Coral Reefs and Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI) seeks to build knowledge and understanding of the inherent linkages between people and coral reefs, and encourage the improved integration and support for livelihood development within coral reef management.

CORALI was launched through the highly successful collaboration between two regional projects:

- **Management of Climate Change impacts on coral Reefs and Coastal Ecosystems in Tsunami affected Areas of the Andaman Sea and South Asia;**
- **Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Development for the Long Term Management and Conservation of MCPAs in South Asia;**

which expanded the planned activities of each project beyond their original scope, and facilitated the development and field testing of an innovative approach to sustainable livelihood enhancement and diversification in six sites across South Asia and Indonesia.

Project Partners CORDIO, IUCN, IMM, ICRAN, SACEP, UNEP are working alongside local field teams and coastal communities through generous funding from both the Foreign Ministry of Finland and the European Union to implement and promote the approaches.

The following collection of information sheets and case studies capture the efforts of the project teams with coastal communities from South Asia and Indonesia in building community visions and adaptive capacity in support of sustainable and equitable livelihood development.





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# The Challenges of Coral Reef Conservation and Livelihood Development

The ecosystem services provided by coral reefs are diverse and include: supporting services to wider ecosystems (e.g. fish breeding grounds); provisioning services (e.g. nutrition and building materials); regulating services (e.g. coastal protection); and cultural services (e.g. recreation, spiritual and education). In South Asia these services benefit a wide range of people in different, complex and changing ways. Many of these people are poor and rely on the reefs for part if not all of their livelihoods.

**The long-term effectiveness of conservation can be undermined where livelihoods of the poor are compromised in the short-term**

In recent decades coral reefs have come under increasing strain from direct human pressure (such as unsustainable fishing, pollution and mining) and environmental trends (such as global warming and natural disasters). Where reefs have been degraded the services that they produce have declined. For poor people who live in those communities and depend on those services, their livelihood outcomes are likely to have suffered as a consequence (fig. 1).

Where environmental protection measures, such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), have been introduced in an attempt to arrest the degradation of coral reefs, in the short-term at least, they can further reduce the services provided by reefs to poor people (fig. 2). Communities have been expected to adapt to the reduction in opportunities from the reef. Even where benefits from marine protection are realised in the long-term (perhaps through tourism, or increased fisheries productivity) the poorer members of reef-dependent communities are often the least able to take advantage of those opportunities. This leaves the poor facing the choice of either accepting a permanent decline in their livelihoods, migration in search of alternatives, or the continued but now illegal exploitation of “protected” resources.

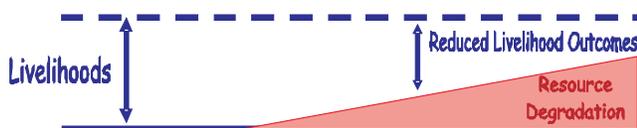


Figure 1: Resource Degradation & Livelihoods Outcomes



Figure 2: Environmental Protection & Livelihoods Outcomes

**The use of livelihood alternatives to complement conservation measures have often failed thus undermining those efforts to conserve resources**

Livelihood enhancement and diversification has been recognised by conservationists as a mechanism to promote livelihood development and encourage people to move away from the harmful exploitation of natural resources.

The majority of the efforts to support livelihood enhancement and diversification so far have tended to be externally driven simplistic solutions, which ignore the complexity of people's lives. These solutions are rarely based on an appreciation of people's strengths and potential or an understanding of the underlying factors helping or inhibiting livelihood diversification. The result has often been “alternative livelihoods” initiatives that promote unsustainable solutions that are poorly adapted to people's capacities, benefit only the most able and have limited market appeal and fail to reflect people's aspirations and hopes for their future.





Where livelihood enhancement and diversification work has been undertaken in parallel with coral reef conservation efforts, this has often been done **after** management measures have been introduced. At this stage people are already attempting to cope with reduced livelihood opportunities and their capacity to adapt has already suffered as a result.

**The Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification (SLED) Process helps people to achieve their livelihood objectives whilst working in harmony with conservation measures**

The Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification (SLED) Process responds to the complexity of people's livelihoods and gives them the capacity and confidence to respond to the challenges set by resource degradation and conservation measures.

The SLED process is designed to help people to take advantage of opportunities to change the nature of their dependency on natural resources and support the conservation measures that have been put in place.

Ultimately SLED creates the conditions where all people are able to make informed choices about their livelihood options and have access to the support they need in order to realise those choices.

The SLED process is based on three phases:

1. Understanding the complexity of people livelihoods and their relationship with natural resources, the wider economy and society. Collaborative learning with people about the diversity of resources, skills, capacities and interests that inevitably make up any community and building a consensus for change;
2. Developing realistic visions and plans for equitable and sustainable livelihood change that are rooted in people's

- strengths, capabilities and reflect market realities;
3. Building people's capabilities and adaptive capacity, together with networks of government, civil society and private sector services to support sustainable and equitable livelihood development.

#### **The Role of SLED in MPA Management**

**The role of SLED in MPA management can be:**

- To help people to take advantage of opportunities to change the nature of their dependency on resources and support the conservation measures that have been put in place;
- To help people to appreciate the value of the environment and the services that it provides to them;
- To build the capacity and confidence of people to adapt and deal with the changes that the MPA brings to the environment, and to people's livelihoods, and helps them to capitalise on those changes to improve their livelihoods;
- To provide a mechanism to increase participation in MPA management processes;
- To invest in sustainable futures for coral reef dependent communities.

**The SLED process has been developed by IMM Ltd. who have built on the lessons of past livelihoods research projects and worldwide experience in change management, personal development and enterprise growth. It provides a framework of action for development and conservation practitioners. Under the Coral Reefs and Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI) this approach has been field tested and further developed, in very different circumstances and institutional settings, in six sites across South Asia and Indonesia.**



# Coral Reefs and Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI)

**CORALI has been designed to address the challenge of “how to better support livelihood development as key part of a more holistic approach to coral reef conservation”.**

CORALI<sup>1</sup> is funded to operate between 2006 and 2008. CORALI has adopted a participatory, interactive process involving practitioners from across the region in a collaborative action to build knowledge and understanding about people and coral reefs. It incorporates three elements:

## 1. Skills and Knowledge Network

CORALI has begun the process of building a network of governmental and non governmental organisations, working with coral reef dependent communities, within South Asia and Indonesia. At this early stage the core network teams have been supported through a process of workshops which have enabled skills and knowledge exchange. A wider network is growing around the CORALI website, where the skills and experiences of the core teams are being used to promote a more people-centred approach to coral reef research and management.

[www.coralweb.org](http://www.coralweb.org)

## 2. Developing an Improved Approach to Socio Economic Monitoring

CORALI has been facilitating attempts to develop an approach to socio-economic monitoring that better serves the local context in coral reef dependent communities in South and South-East Asia. They have worked on building an approach that is accessible to the community as well as to outsiders, low on development resources, that provides updated reliable and relevant information, and that is transparent, simplified and easy to understand.

The partners in CORALI have developed a framework for socio-economic monitoring. The Reef Conservation and Action from the People's Perspective (RECAPP) framework is designed to be used by fieldworkers at regular intervals to learn with the communities about their perceptions of the changes that are happening with the coral reefs and the people who depend upon them. RECAPP is designed to capture people's perceptions about changes in coral reefs and utilize local knowledge as a cost-effective way of identifying issues that may require more extensive action such as biophysical or socio-economic monitoring, or awareness and guidance.

## 3. Developing a Participatory Approach to Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification (SLED) in coral reef dependent communities

CORALI has coordinated attempts to further develop a process for Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification (SLED) in South Asia and Indonesia. Over a period of 12 months a series of workshops have been held with field teams from across the region. Using a process of action research the teams have created field guidance and evidence to enhance and promote the SLED process.

The SLED process is designed to help people to take advantage of opportunities to change the nature of their dependency on natural resources and support the conservation measures that have been put in place. Ultimately SLED creates the conditions where all people are able to make informed choices about their livelihood options and have access to the support they need in order to realise those choices.



The SLED approach will be presented at a management and policy forum which is scheduled to be held in February 2007.

<sup>1</sup> CORALI is a collaborative initiative between IUCN – The World Conservation Union, Coastal Ocean Research and Development in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) and IMM Ltd., as well as national and local organizations in South Asia and Indonesia.



SLED Workshop Participants

## Building Partnerships for Coral Reefs and Livelihoods across South Asia and the Andaman Sea

Through the CORALI initiative 6 teams from across the region have worked to further develop and pilot test the SLED approach. The teams have worked in different contexts with differing levels of resources, but have benefited from working collaboratively. The teams include:



**The Community Help Foundation (CHF)**, in Bar Reef, Sri Lanka



**The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Environmental Team (ANET)** in Middle and North Andaman Islands, India



**Foundation of Eydhafushi Youth Linkage (FEYLI)** and the **Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project (AEC)** in Baa Atoll, Republic of the Maldives



**The Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society (CARESS)** in Minicoy Island, Union Territory of Lakshadweep



**Peoples Action for Development (PAD)** in the Gulf of Mannar, India



**PUGAR Foundation** (Centre for People's Movement and Advocacy) and the **World Conservation Society** in Aceh, Indonesia

### Ongoing Role for CORALI

With further funding CORALI has the potential to build its role within the region to provide:

1. Support – Building the skills and capacity of organisations to incorporate livelihood development as part of a more holistic approach to conservation of coral reefs.
2. Guidance- Developing and distributing information to inform and influence policy relating to coral reefs and providing training and guidance materials to organisations working with coral reef dependent communities within South Asia.
3. Coordination – Providing linkages between organisations working within South Asia and in other regions to share experiences and knowledge of working with coral reef dependent communities.
4. Communication – Taking global experiences to inform and influence practices within the region and taking local experiences to inform globally. Providing information on the status of coral reef dependent communities for decision makers at local, national and global levels.



# Visioning for Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification in Weh Island, Aceh



## The Community

The project focuses on the communities residing in Mukim le Meulee on Weh Island, Aceh. This area consists of three distinct villages: le Meulee, Ujong Kareung and Anoi Itam villages. The three villages have very different characteristics, including ethnic composition, livelihood activities, history and ancestral heritage. Most of the inhabitants live in coastal areas, except some of villagers from Ujong Kareung

le Meulee village has the highest population density of the three villages. Employment in government agencies is the most common livelihood activity in le Meulee village. Engagement in day labour and small scale industries (e.g. brick making, paving block making, automobile workshop enterprises) are other common livelihood activities. A few members of the community also run small retail businesses. Even those employed in government agencies engage in fishing as a hobby, and this is culturally significant as well as being important for consumption. Ujong Kareung Village is the least developed of the three villages. The most common livelihood activity in Ujong Kareung is crop farming. There are a few people who fish for a living, and the rest of its inhabitants rely on small trading and day labouring for income. Most people on Anoi Itam village also depend on crop farming (e.g. coconut, cacao and clove). Fishing and day labouring are the second most important livelihood activities. Livestock is seen as an important means of financial investment for the people in this village.

## The Environment

Located on the east coast of Weh Island, Mukim le Meulee shares the general characteristics of Weh Island, which is essentially a coral island with largely unfertile land. This site has 2 springs, but the soil itself is not good enough for short term cropping. The island has some hilly areas, several white sandy beaches and cliff beaches suitable for tourism, and is exposed to wind during the south-east monsoon. Reef condition is relatively good, with

potential areas for protected area management and tourism.

The “Panglima Laot”, or local enforcement authorities, are responsible for enforcing fisheries regulations. Enforcement enjoys different levels of success in the different villages. Even though the community of Anoi Itam is subject to regulations banning net fishing on their reef areas, the Panglima Laot is weak in enforcing these regulations. Conversely, le Meulee village has a strong level of law enforcement by the community to protect their reef areas.

## SLED Activities

Using the livelihoods framework and a participatory approach to learning about livelihoods the field-team found they were able to build strong relationships and gather much more in-depth information about people and the community. This was largely due to the fact the process emphasised mutual respect with the community, and information gathered was validated and shared with the community. This contrasted with their past approaches which had been based on very formal lists of questions to identify needs. In fact the process of validating secondary information with the community the field-team identified that the data-available in the village office did not give a good representation of the community.

The SLED process allowed the field teams to identify the factors that help or inhibit people's abilities to change. The SLED method provided the field team with a comprehensive approach that allowed them to get a better understanding of the broader factors affecting people's livelihood (e.g. the role of service providers and enabling agencies, external factors, trends and policies that affect people livelihoods).

The field-team worked with individuals and groups within the community in a process that helped people to appreciate their strengths and potential, and importantly built consensus between individuals and



groups. The process encouraged groups to move away from a reliance on outside aid for self improvement to a belief that they themselves had collective strengths and resources to initiate development. The field team also began the process of meeting with government agencies to help the people to build the positive relationships that are needed to support their livelihood development.

#### Potential for Future Activities

Working as a community facilitator the field teams can:

- **Help the communities to appreciate their strengths, build confidence, motivation and social capital;**

These characteristics, once common, are now sorely lacking since the 1980s shift towards government-led “development projects” which has had the effect of creating a culture of dependency and a lack of interest in taking responsibility for needs within their own communities.

- **Build up the links between communities, funding or government agencies and/or the private sector;**

Government agencies are the main institutions that have the power to improve peoples’ livelihoods, but do not always know and understand exactly what people want or need. The field team, together with the community and other networks, could help the community to voice their opinions through a range of media such as newspapers, reports, verbal dialogues, seminars, community fairs or exhibitions, and through people-led planning.

- **Assist people to solve conflicts among groups within the community;**

Continuing to assist the communities to establish village planning mechanisms is one key thing that field team hopes to achieve in order to ensure that the people have greater involvement in development programmes, from the planning to implementing and evaluating stages.

- **Information, analysis and decision making support;**

Using the teams skills and knowledge in organising people, providing information and facilitating decision making

processes.

- **Link communities to service providers, including assisting people to set up small credit scheme mechanism to enhance their livelihood.**

#### PUGAR

PUGAR Foundation (Centre for People's Movement and Advocacy) was established in February 1992 at Banda Aceh, NAD Province. The focus of PUGAR foundation is to empower coastal community in respects to their rights as citizens, based on local custom. The PUGAR foundation is also concerned with empowering women groups through vocational training to enhance their livelihoods. Past activities of the PUGAR Foundation include investigations into destructive fishing in Weh Island, district development programmes, and monitoring and advocacy to empower local civil society organisations to protect their coastal environment. The PUGAR foundation is also working to empower coastal community organisations to participate in the post-tsunami reconstruction and post-conflict reintegration processes in Aceh.

#### World Conservation Society (WCS) Marine - Indonesia

WCS Indonesia Marine Program is part of WCS International Marine Programme. WCS works with local NGOs, communities and governments to improve coral reef resource management, design MPAs, develop and implement ecological and socioeconomic monitoring programmes, build institutional and community management capacity, training and educational programmes in general in support of MPA policy and conservation management. WCS also collects and analyses coral reef data as part of ongoing scientific investigations on the impacts of fishing and other disturbances to coral reefs, coral bleaching, socio-economic factors influencing marine resource management and coral reef ecology.

#### Livelihood Diversity - Community Story - Group of Fishers

Working with a group of fishers in Ujong Kareung Village through focus group discussions, the field team found that during their first consultations, the group saw their main aspiration was to obtain direct aid from the field team or some other service provider, such as free boats, fishing gear, etc. During the last meeting that the field team held, the same group had changed their opinions on what were their principal needs. The group began to discuss their need to find alternatives to fishing during the south-east monsoon. During this time normal livelihood activities are curtailed as it is not possible to go fishing. Instead of proposing that they should ask the government or NGOs to find solution, the approach used as part of SLED process encouraged the group to identify their own strengths. The group started to express the belief they could find a solution to this problem through working together to develop a breakwater in front of their beach.

The Coral Reef Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI) was made possible through generous funding from the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the support of the following partners:



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# Visioning for Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification in Middle and North Andaman Islands



## The Community

The Karen community of the Middle and North Andaman Islands settled in the islands in 1925, from erstwhile Burma, now Myanmar. The Andaman Karen are primarily an agricultural society, with knowledge of the forests around them, who looked to the sea after settlement for sustenance and livelihoods. The community largely belong to the Sgaw Karen ethnic group and were brought to the islands by Christian missionaries of the British Empire. Today, a population of approximately 2221 is distributed in eight villages. Though a shy and peaceable people, there have been many instances when the work abilities and knowledge of the community at effectively utilising the natural resources has been showcased. However, in the face of increasing demands of external markets and the need for cash income they are struggling to adapt.



## The Environment

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands are the largest archipelago system in the Bay of Bengal, covering a total area of over 8249 km<sup>2</sup>, and with a coastline of 1962 km. Almost 86 % of the land area is covered with evergreen and tropical rainforests, now known to be a globally significant hotspot for biodiversity. The littoral and marine environments of the archipelago include nesting beaches for four species of marine turtles, and highly productive sea grass beds. The archipelago is fringed by spectacular and pristine coral reefs, and one of India's largest mangrove ecosystems, inhabited by saltwater crocodiles and the giant water monitor lizard. Of the 306 islands, 94 are designated as Wildlife Sanctuaries, six as National parks, and five as Tribal reserves. Only two of the national parks give focused protection to the marine environment.



Despite their remoteness, these extraordinary islands were rapidly colonized by settlers. Indiscriminate deforestation destroyed natural habitats of numerous plants and animals, and led to large-scale

degradation of freshwater sources. The fragile marine ecosystems are jeopardized by siltation, contamination, and short-sighted marine resource exploitation, including sand mining for construction. Employment opportunities are few and hard to come by, forcing many inhabitants toward opportunistic ventures and exploitive practices to ensure their livelihood, which degrade the natural resources further.

## SLED Activities

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Environmental Team (ANET), began work with the Karen Community with a formal meeting, where the role of the field team in gathering information on the community was explained. Informal meetings were conducted with different residents to explore their livelihoods, generating 'livelihood matrices' to demonstrate the diversity of livelihoods within the community. Families are involved in activities ranging from fishing for income, subsistence, specialised/target fishing, agriculture, opportunistic ventures, and Government service.

There are many approaches in participatory learning and community development that have been developed, over decades of approaching social mobilisation and sustainable growth, which have focused on rigid methodologies. The SLED process however, does not place emphasis on any one specific tool. The SLED process provides a framework of objectives that enabled us to direct our activities while allowing the flexibility of using approaches and tools that met with the social and cultural needs of the Karen community.

The process we used involved approaches in 'appreciative learning', the use of resources such as government records, our data sheet, visits to houses for a cup of tea, and conversations. It was on issues of changes and peoples response to changes that have occurred that generated the most animated conversations, providing insight into livelihood processes and their relationships

within and outside of the community. Though we recognised that we could never grasp all aspects of people's lives, this approach to learning about livelihoods provided a solid background to peoples experiences. The work to understand the factors that have inhibited or helped livelihood change was particularly revealing for the team and for the community.

Categorizing SLED into three phases with different components gave the work a new dimension wherein we had objectives and criteria to test our approach as well as flexibility for the community to take control. The approach through SLED, with an emphasis on positive outlook, ways and means of searching for and recognising inherent and potential strengths and capabilities, is a crucial development in the way the community is engaged and this built confidence and enthusiasm in the community.

Working as a community facilitator our small team has been able to bring members of village leadership, private sector representatives, government agencies and church functionaries to a single platform to plan for improved livelihood outcomes for members of the community.

**Potential for Future Activities**

- As a facilitator, we have built linkages between crucial government functionaries and community leadership, this has brought some positive outcomes and there is immense scope for continuing this work;
- We hope to bring government services that could

augment income sources such as agriculture, animal husbandry, small scale industry and forestry departments to the village;

- We have documented a variety of aspirations amongst community members and these have to be analysed for their content and feasibility. We will work with the community to bring out their sense of ownership when it comes toward implementation;

- In response to the SLED work, the community have identified opportunities to capitalise on support from existing government welfare schemes which are designed to promote activities such as weaving and carpentry, improved prices for fish, fishing gear, agricultural possibilities in the 'off season', craft making and sale with the boom in tourism;

- As a facilitator we plan to continue our association with the community in the long term when opportunities arise, irrespective of projects.

**The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Environmental Team**

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Environmental Team (ANET), a division of the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust, was constituted in 1990 after many field visits and surveys for fauna by personnel from the Madras Crocodile Bank Trust in the 1970's to 1980's. The vision for ANET is that it will continue to be a proactive conservation research and education organisation, and a main base for like-minded organisations. We have a five hectare Base Station, boats, residential huts, an interpretation centre, kitchen and office at Wandoor South Andaman Island.

**Livelihood Diversity - Community Story - Saw John**

Saw John, is the member of the ANET field team who has played the most active role within the field team as well as within the community we work with. He was not involved in community development in the past but had developed a deep interest in it from observing the efforts of friends, family and elders in trying to bring progress to the community and take the community forward to keep pace with developments around them. John has witnessed a change in the approaches used to engage the community, notably how ANET attempted the visioning exercises to demonstrate the shape the work could take from the beginning. In recognising that we can only be a small part of the development process, the role of ANET was to help the community to "learn how to feed themselves rather than to be fed". In the visioning work that John has completed there are many ideas that have come to the forefront. And although the process has not brought about a visible change as yet, we have seen a change in attitude and confidence within the community and will continue our work to support implementation of SLED, with consensus from community members.

The responses of Saw John and the community members over the period of the SLED process is very encouraging. We are also reminded that there is a large body of work remaining which must done in terms of advancing visions for development into action. This is the challenge that lies ahead and it is not something that can be described in few words before it is experienced. Inherent in the challenge to somebody as fresh in this kind of work as Saw John is the value of attitude and behaviour shifts, as well as unplanned possibilities that come to light during the process of understanding and interacting with and within the community. Engaging members from within the community has had a greater impact and developed stewardship for the initiatives and visions.

The Coral Reef Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI) was made possible through generous funding from the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the support of the following partners:



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# Visioning for Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification in Kudawa Village, Bar Reef, Kalpitiya



## The Community

Kudawa is a rural fishing village located in the Kalpitiya peninsular of the north-western coastal segment of Sri Lanka. Kudawa was established two generations previously by migrant fishermen from neighbouring villages, but following a land allotment scheme in 1960, where each household was leased 2 acres of land on a 99 year term, the village became permanently established with settlers. Today a mono-ethnic (Sinhalese) mono-religious (Roman Catholic) population of 716 reside in the area. Fishing in the Bar Reef area is the most prominent livelihood for community members, with a limited number of people engaging in non-fishing activities such as small scale enterprises, wage labourers, animal rearing and agriculture.



At the inception of the settlement (1960's) fishermen engaged in subsistence level fishing using traditional fishing crafts and gear in the near shore area. In the 1970's the Fisheries Department introduced monofilament nets and thereafter the fishing effort shifted to the Bar Reef. Following the introduction of lobster nets by a private company in 1973, fishing activities were accelerated and the Bar Reef system began to degrade. The collection of sea cucumbers and ornamental fish started in 2000 posing an additional threat to the reef system.

## The Environment

The village environment contains a diversity of coastal habitats such as sandy beaches, lagoon areas, coral reefs, sand dunes, mangroves, sea grass beds and salt marshes. The diverse coral reef system is located between 2 and 8 km from the shoreline, and extends for approximately 40 km<sup>2</sup>. The community is highly dependent on the Bar Reef, an area of high biodiversity with over 200 species of fish, and 120 coral species recorded. In addition to the degradation caused by natural impacts such as the 1998 mass coral bleaching event, human activities place considerable pressure on the reef system



and associated environments. A combination of unsustainable fishing methods, over-fishing and a lack of enforcement and awareness about the importance and ecology of the reefs and the other coastal habitats poses a constant threat to many species inhabiting this area. In response, the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DLWC) declared an area of 306.7 km<sup>2</sup> of Bar Reef as a marine sanctuary in 1992. Despite the designation, no management efforts have been implemented by the DWLC. However, arrangements are presently being made by the authorities to demarcate the core area of the Bar Reef Sanctuary with the agreement of the community.

## SLED Activities

Using the SLED approach the Community Help Foundation (CHF) worked alongside experts in sociology, resource management and agriculture, to initiate field investigations with the community of Kaduwa in March 2007. Initially the fieldwork focused on building effective relationships and partnerships with the relevant stakeholders and better understanding the existing livelihoods and dependency of the community on the coral reef resources. The field team explored people's livelihoods with them, attempting to identify their strengths and aspirations that could enable them to make changes.

During the field work carried out for the first phase of SLED, the field team learnt from the community about their past experiences, the services available to the community, how they use information for decision making and change, the evolution of the Kudawa settlement, the nature of livelihood activities in which the community is engaged, the current status of the coral reefs and the coastal habitats in the area, community views and attitudes on current livelihoods, the house hold income and expenditure pattern and other gender specific issues. As a result of this process of joint learning the field team established a positive relationship with the community

who were enthusiastic to continue their participation in SLED activities.

The second phase of fieldwork commenced in August 2007 and sought to validate and build upon the previous findings. The field team worked on: an analysis of factors that help or inhibit change within the community; establishing a mechanism for joint learning and feed back between the field team and the community; working with the community in a vision building process; exploring potential opportunities for developing livelihood options; and developing strategies for achieving those visions.

In view of the restrictions imposed on fishing due to the current security situation, and the conservation and management efforts being tested in the Bar Reef area, the SLED process has assisted community members in realising the importance of diversifying their livelihood options. It has helped them to recognise their strengths and given them the confidence to pursue their visions for better livelihoods.

#### Potential for Future Activities

To support the realization of the visions developed within the community, the CHF can play an important role in:

- Community mobilization;

- Planning, implementation and monitoring;
- Identification and development of strategic partnerships and market linkages;
- Developing linkages between the community and government authorities;
- Provide technical support to people (for example, water management, organic fertiliser production and use, feed preparation);
- Supporting livelihood diversification activities such as Seaweed and Sea-bass culture - a pilot test has already commenced at the site and Home gardening improvement;
- Skills development programme to broaden community prospects.

#### The Community Help Foundation (CHF)

The CHF was established with a goal of “ensuring sustainable socio, economic, educational, cultural development and establishing peace and co-existence among all communities living in the country”. They work with unprivileged communities across Sri Lanka, promoting social and cultural values, developing income generating activities, providing relief during natural disasters and improving the care and livelihood prospects of children.

#### Livelihood Diversity - Community Story - John Bosco

John Bosco is from a five member family and is the youngest son. At 44 years old, he used to be a fisherman, but is now engaged in small business operates in Kudawa. Following higher education studies John returned to the village and engaged in social services. Although he has no economic difficulties, he fished in the Bar reef area with his brother for fun and to earn money for his expenses. As a result of leg injury and to spend more time on village social work he gave up fishing and started a shop selling oil for fishing boats in the Kandakuliya main fishing camp. The business required him to invest his own capital and obtain financial assistance from his brother. He was fortunate to establish effective linkages with the fish traders in the area and thereafter he opened a small restaurant with one of his friends in the same location. After his marriage, he vested his oil business and the restaurant to a friend and started a grocery shop in the village. His retired father took over the shop management and he moved into vegetable cultivation, earning good income. This continued until his father died. During the same period John was also involved with his brother's whole sell fish trading business.

John's main aspiration is to provide a decent education for his three children. John as a key community member and Chairman of the Puttalam District Fisheries Federation, was involved in the SLED process from the beginning. John was not fully convinced in the early stages of the process and desired outcomes. However after completion of the discovery phase and the direction phase, he was able to realize the importance of livelihood change to ensure the sustainable fisheries and resource management in the vicinity of the Bar Reef, and he positively contributed towards the vision creation. John now has developed his own vision for his livelihood and is committed to working with the CHF to achieve this. His positive attitudes have been further strengthened by his attendance in a study tour programme in Thailand organized by the ongoing Coastal Resource Management Project in mid October 2007.

The Coral Reef Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI) was made possible through generous funding from the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the support of the following partners:



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# Visioning for Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification in Minicoy Island



## The Community

This study is being carried out in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, (UTL). The UTL consists of 36 coral islands of which 11 are inhabited. Since inhabiting the Islands, the people have made use of the bio-resources available for their survival and economic livelihood.

The people of Lakshadweep are scheduled tribes and rely heavily on government subsidies. In Minicoy Island the households are grouped into villages called Avah. Two Bodukaka (headman) and Boduthata (headwomen) administer each avah. and ensure smooth functioning of the villages. Every household contributes labour for village duties. Peer groups of girls and boys of the same age called Vili, are assigned specific functions. This communal sharing of duties is known as baamedu.



Despite the community structures, traditional values are eroding with access to higher education, salaried jobs, television, and internet, and the matrilineal system is breaking down. The Panchayath raj and politics have brought opportunities for leadership, and market forces now have a greater influence on livelihood choices. Eco-tourism/scuba-diving is now seen as the mantra to development. Reef-fisheries have been progressively commercialised and fishermen report changes in catch size, catch composition and fish size.



## The Environment

Coral reefs provide the basis of life in Lakshadweep, for the very island the communities live on is built up of corals. The island conditions have given rise to distinct types of flora; and the reef around the lagoon is critical in protecting the island from storm waves. The environment is being affected by various natural and human impacts, such as climate change and growing population pressures leading to:

- Increased fishing pressure on reef fisheries;
- Pollution from oil discharge and effluent seepage from septic tanks;
- Shore line changes due to both erosion and

- erosion prevention measures;
- Salinisation of the ground water.

## SLED Activities

The Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society (CARESS) has been working to engage the local community to establish a conservation, enterprise and livelihood development project in the UT of Lakshadweep. Initially CARESS used an appreciative enquiry approach (AE) and other livelihood frameworks. However, we found the SLED approach, which builds on the other participatory approaches such as AE, to be very pertinent to the situation in the islands. Both the local community and CARESS have found the tools and approaches very useful in the process of joint learning. The visioning process also provided clarity for people in establishing their aspirations for future livelihood development.

During the discovery phase CARESS held discussions in the context of the livelihoods framework with different individuals and groups in the Lakshadweep Islands. The fact that the approach is driven by the people appealed to everyone. Participants spent time thinking of their happiest moments and how change has affected their lives. This made them realise that they were not helpless, but were capable of taking charge of their own lives. One of the changes noted is that the groups have become more assertive and are confident about approaching and even demanding services from the service providers. They are now more prepared for dealing with changes brought about both new policy and management strategies and by natural shocks.

Importantly, the SLED approach helps to build trust, as a lot of time is spent helping people to think through their options and see the pathways that can lead to the attainment of their goals, and the joint learning and feedback ensure that relationships are maintained.

The community now has greater confidence that their aspirations will be voiced and that they themselves can work towards achieving their visions.

A group of unemployed youngsters, who had felt quite helpless to do anything a year ago, have now come together and registered a youth group (Aloodi Brothers Club), with a mission of encouraging sports and culture on the island. The visioning process helped them explore different pathways to self-employment. They are now formulating a plan to set up a water sports centre as a business. This will cater to tourists through nature guides and water sports equipment rental. They plan to invest part of the profit earned from the tourism activities in equipment maintenance and carrying out conservation and monitoring activities. The group are now keen to have training in writing proposals and securing grants.

### Potential for Future Activities

The SLED approach is a continuous process that can be refined as new needs and goals come to light. The community is very dynamic and made up of many different groups, some of who are more articulate and vociferous than others and so have been better able to participate in the short time available under CORALI. CARESS can ensure that the joint learning mechanism is kept alive and extended to help all the groups to articulate their visions and be included.

CARESS will continue their role as both facilitator and service provider as the following in the realisation of

visions:

- Facilitate the visioning process and help people to work toward their visions dealing with new challenges as they come;
- Facilitate planning for business/enterprise and supporting its establishment;
- Providing information for people to inform their choices;
- Facilitate networking with other service providers;
- Provide relevant services such as credit, market study, scholarships, training;
- Carry out environmental awareness and education programmes;
- Encourage the establishment of community managed no take zones.

### Centre for Action Research on Environment Science and Society (CARESS)

CARESS is a non-profit organisation based in Chennai conducting outreach work in India with isolated communities living in the coral reef areas and the Transhimalaya. Activities include environmental education and awareness, community based monitoring and socio-economic assessments. CARESS conduct exposure/scoping tours and help people identify the options available to them to take up environmentally sustainable livelihoods. To achieve our mission we network with other research and development institutions, relevant Government departments and the private sector. We also run a small micro credit project and provide small business loans to women self help groups.

### Livelihood Diversity - Community Story - Maliku Hikimas Producers Society

The Lakshadweep economy runs on marketing processed Tuna fish. During the visioning process with several groups of people it became clear that marketing of Hikimas – the traditional smoked and sundried tuna fish was a common community vision. Traditionally hikimas is marketed through agents in Mangalore and Tuticorin on the mainland. The fisher households felt that they were getting a raw deal at the hands of the agents but had no other marketing choice. They had a negative attitude to life and were apathetic about doing anything to change their situations.

Seeing that this was a common vision that could enhance the life of all the fishermen in the Lakshadweep, we carried out a market study and brought back the finished packaged product that was sold in the super markets in Colombo. We used this as a show and tell tool in the group/village meetings. The fisher families were astonished to see the packaged hikimas since they had no idea how it was sold to consumers.

The community have now registered a marketing society called the Maliku Hikimas Producers Society and the village has provided a building to house their packaging unit. Enthusiasm for the initiative waned when the electrical connection was not given to the unit, but another round of discussions made them understand that these are only start up troubles, and that for smooth functioning in the organised sector they must have all the necessary certifications in order. Today the community are stoically applying for the various certificates. One of the society members who participated in a scoping visit, has now the confidence to stand as a candidate for the panchayath elections to be held in December 2007.

The Coral Reef Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI) was made possible through generous funding from the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the support of the following partners:



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# Visioning for Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification in Baa Atoll



## The Community

Baa Atoll, located to the northwest of Malé, has a total area of approximately 1,200 km<sup>2</sup>. The atoll is comprised of seventy-five islands, thirteen of which are inhabited with a combined population of approximately 12,000 people. A further six islands have been developed as resorts.

The communities reliance on corals reefs is significant. They form very basis of the land on which they live, and are also the key attraction for tourism, a source of building materials, coastal protection and fisheries. Although fishing activity has declined since the resorts opened, fishing remains an important activity for the coastal communities, with both tuna and reef fishing being carried out. The production of handicrafts and other materials for the tourist industry is also significant and Baa is well-known for its fine craftsmanship especially in weaving and lacquer.

## The Environment

Baa Atoll is representative of the biodiversity found in the atolls of the Maldives. Located on the west side of the Maldivian atoll chain, it is more strongly affected by the southwest monsoon. This drives seasonal currents and upwelling from the surrounding deep ocean that bring with them high concentrations of deep water nutrients, which in turn draw significant concentrations of whale sharks and manta rays and also contributes to a unique diversity of benthic fauna. Species such as the rare pink hydrozoan corals, bryozoans and sea slugs are endemic to Baa atoll. Baa has a particularly high density of the ring-shaped reef forms called faroes, a peculiar reef structure unique to the Maldives, as well as other unique reef forms.

Due to recent changes in demand and commercial exploitation, some of the marine species of Baa are at the brink of extinction. Extensive sand mining for home building poses the major threat of sand erosion in most of the islands. Baa Atoll has one of the largest areas of mangroves in the central part of the Maldivian atoll chain.

However, people's use of mangroves for fire wood, has all but removed mangroves in most of the inhabited islands, adding to the speed of beach erosion. Recently the government has declared two protected sites in Baa: Dhigaliha, an area identified as having the richest marine ecosystem in Baa Atoll; and the island of Olhugiri's, whose unique native vegetation provides one of only two roosting sites in the Maldives for the frigate bird.

## SLED Activities

The Foundation of Eydhafushi Youth Linkage (FEYLI) has carried out many livelihood projects including ongoing post tsunami projects. Many of these projects however did not deliver the expected outcomes. Very few beneficiaries actually carried on the livelihood activity that was targeted for them, and the sustainability of projects was poor.

Following training and participation in the SLED approach our project activities have taken a different approach. FEYLI now has a greater appreciation for the complex and dynamic nature of livelihoods in coastal communities. The SLED approach, developed in CORALI, helps participants to see livelihoods in a more holistic way, identifying all the components of peoples' livelihoods and integrating external factors. It has helped us to rectify our past mistakes. Previously it was us or the donor who determined the aid or livelihood activity that a target group should take on. Now the emphasis has shifted to ensure that we are guided by individuals, understanding their past, how it has changed, discovering their strengths, and using the information to identify what they can do to meet their future aspirations.

The SLED approach builds self-confidence in community members and helps them to discover their strengths and potential, while also helping individuals and the community to develop their visions for the future. It has facilitated us to initiate a change in a dependent culture where people expect

everything to be delivered or provided for them, rather than seeking what they can do themselves. Now people see us as facilitators rather than providers. Importantly, the community has gained a better understanding of the various components affecting their livelihoods which they were not aware of before. They now also realise the importance of building good relationships with service providers, and in looking beyond their own neighbourhood for potential alternative livelihood activities.

In helping people to assess the best ways to achieve their visions we have understood various analytical decision-making tools that would reduce risk and make the decision better. We have also developed new means of enabling continued learning for the community. We have established linkages that will enable us, through CORALI, to continue to develop our approach based on best practices from other livelihood development projects within South Asia.

#### Potential for Future Activities

To continue with their role of facilitating people to move through the SLED process and extend this approach within the communities and to neighbouring island FEYLI will continue to:

- Help people to discover potential opportunities for livelihood activities as things change (continue visioning process);
- Continue to develop the networks between people and other service providers such as transport, finance

and marketing;

- Support the community in voicing their demands to government and service providers;
- Be there to support people through the process of livelihood change;
- Help people to develop their skills in areas such as: entrepreneurial training (especially for poor women), skill development training / vocational training, marketing experience etc;
- Provide access to information to enable the community to better inform their choices;
- Develop decision support services giving people access to different decision making tools.

#### FEYLI and the Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project (AEC)

FEYLI works to “Achieve Sustainable Socio-Economic Development, Peace and Justice for the community of Eydhafushi and Baa Atoll”. The main focus areas are improvement of social awareness, livelihood and human resource development. FEYLI has worked in collaboration with the Atoll Ecosystem Conservation Project to implement the SLED approach.

AEC is a project of the Government of the Maldives co-financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and implemented through UNDP, which seeks to mainstream biodiversity into sectoral policies and programs; conserve biodiversity by establishing and managing protected areas; and relieve livelihood-related pressure on biodiversity by enabling local people to pursue more sustainable, alternative livelihoods.

#### Livelihood Diversity - Community Story - Khalid Ibrahim

Khalid was a fisherman from a young age, and a construction helper. He later became a mason, continuing his fishing occupation in his spare time. Due to old age and physical inability, he distanced himself from fishing and masonry work, and learnt the skill of broom making from a friend. This is now his major livelihood activity. After the tsunami, his family received aid from a local NGO for home-shed farming. His wife leads the agriculture activity from which now they earn a decent living.

Khalid was involved in the SLED field work from the start. At first he was very reserved and sceptical about our questions and it took sometime for us to break the ice. We had to very clearly explain to him about our work and role in the project, and work to gain his trust. After sometime he was very open and cooperative with us. During phase I, we learnt about his life history, the changes that have taken place in his livelihood and his aspirations for future. During phase II, we learnt about his strengths, developed his vision for future and found alternative means to enhance and diversify his livelihood activities.

Khalid's vision for future is “To cultivate on large-scale on permanent or long-term leased farm land, with a proper electric irrigation facility established, having means and know-how to control diseases and pests, all required input materials (fertiliser, seed, chemicals, etc) locally available, able to market to own island, nearby islands and resorts, as well as to Male', with the establishment of regular and reliable transport mechanism”. This comprehensive vision is not something that Khalid had ever articulated before. The SLED approach was key to him discovering his strengths and past successes, and in building his confidence and vision.

The Coral Reef Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI) was made possible through generous funding from the European Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the support of the following partners:



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# Visioning for Sustainable Livelihoods Enhancement and Diversification in the Gulf of Mannar



## The Community

Three villages were selected for CORALI fieldwork, located in the Gulf of Mannar. The predominance of marine based activities and low education levels within the communities indicates the significance that the coral ecosystems have had in sustaining people's livelihoods through the generations.

The coral reefs provide benefits to a wide range of people, including shoreline protection, small-scale fisheries and resources that can be accessed with very limited inputs (e.g. divers, who are specialized in chunks, sea cucumber and ornamental fish collection and women who harvest sea grass and shell fish).



## The Environment

The Tamil Nadu coast, Gulf of Mannar is a distinct area where rich coral reef ecosystems are present. It has a chain of 21 islands along a stretch of 140 km between Thoothukudi and Rameswaram and currently constitutes the National Marine Park (National Biosphere Reserve). It has been estimated that some 117 species of stony corals inhabit the Gulf of Mannar and shelter a variety of fauna and flora of economic value including cowries, cones, volutes, murices, whelks, stromboids, chunks, tonnids, oysters, holothurians, starfishes, and sponges. The Gulf of Mannar occupies a prominent place in the cultural heritage and history of India.

The environment is impacted by a range of human activities including the recent Sethusamudram Ship Canal Project, many polluting industries in Thoothukudi, the illegal garnet sand mining, trawlers which destroy the sea beds by dragging nets, and the nuclear reactor in Koodenkulam, all of which pose a threat to the vulnerable coral reef ecosystem and the livelihoods of the many people who depend on it.

## SLED Activities

The Peoples Action for Development (PAD) field team has been working with the three

coastal communities to apply the SLED approach. The SLED approach has changed the PAD team member's attitude towards livelihood development, from providing to empowering. The team built their work on a robust understanding of the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, giving them a more systematic understanding of the complexity of people's livelihoods, which they were able to relate to during the SLED activities.

The SLED approach has improved the work of the organisation, particularly with its systematic approach to dealing with livelihood diversity and the focus on people's strengths and potential. Previously, PAD's approach was focused on problems and needs. Many problem focused processes do not retain the interest of the community since they demand long time periods in which people focus on what they don't have and the problems they face. It is disempowering, and often leads to a loss of time, energy, and money. Additionally, the livelihoods of the community members and their priorities are diverse, and past process have not enabled this diversity to be reflected, leading to many groups either missing out on development opportunities or being further marginalised by them.

The SLED process begins by helping the individual, peer groups and community to identify their past achievements, strengths and the existing support systems. Building on this foundation, the visioning process helps individuals, groups and the community to develop independent plans to achieve their visions and move forward. As a people centred and holistic approach, the SLED process empowers people to lead the process of development by giving them voice and choice.

During the vision building process, individual to groups and groups to community, the poorest of the poor participated with total involvement. The inclusive process energised the people and many were happy and keen to share their experiences. We felt a sense of confidence



community about the future. The process was internalised and the activities were carried out in a fun manner, which led to the cooperation of all the individuals and groups to develop their community vision and analyse their strength and support. A community meeting, where almost all the community members were present, was held for individuals and groups to present their visions. Here even the widows felt proud and confident to participate and share their visions. PAD facilitated the meeting to bring out the common/shared elements from each individuals presentation in order to develop a community vision. This process has not developed any dependency culture on the outsiders rather built the self-confidence of the individuals and groups.

The individual, groups, and community have a broad understanding about the past and present life conditions which they had not synthesised before. Many have now started working towards making their vision a reality. A sense of ownership towards the development process is emerging in the community as a result of community participation in the SLED process.

#### Potential for Future Activities

With further funding PAD will facilitate the individuals, and community to evolve the pathways to realise their visions by:

- Strengthening the social linkages and support within

the community;

- Strengthening the interface between different levels of Government and between the Government and the community;
- Exposing individuals to activities/entrepreneurs within and outside the village;
- Providing skills training, linkages to service providers and markets;
- Initiating fisher and palmyrah cooperative marketing;
- Sustaining the creative learning centres and 3 'S' (Sun, Sea, Sand) clubs for the children, adolescent and the youths;
- Establishing a Village Resource Centre and Village Knowledge Centres to provide people with needs based information, materials, training and linkages;
- Specific programmes for adolescents on Life Skills to improve their employability in non-fishing sectors;
- Reducing the health expenditure by organizing regular & periodical health camps through Government Primary Health Centre and NGOs.

#### Peoples Action for Development (PAD)

Peoples Action for Development - PAD was registered during 1985, it established its base at Gulf of Mannar region in 2002 as a non-profit, non-political, non-religious, society committed to nature interventions for strengthening the food and livelihood security through

#### Livelihood Diversity - Community Story - Velammal

Velammal is a widow who hesitated to participate in the visioning process like any other shy woman. At 40, Velammal is the head of the family and has 4 children, all of whom are studying at school. Her father-in-law is staying with her.

Velammal collects seaweed from the nearby island by Vallam, and has done so for the past 10 years. Through this, she earns about Rps 20 to 50 per day. Collection of seaweed is possible only for six months, so for the rest of the year she is involved in mat weaving out of palmyrah leaves. She sells the mats in the nearby town (Ervadi Tharha) and the income she gets out of this helps in meeting the daily expenditures for basic necessities.

Her most proud occasion was when her daughter completed her school final with a good score. As a widow she takes the pride in educating her daughter, though it was discouraged by her relatives. After some time, Velammal was happy to share and cherish her strengths with the field team, and identify the support she had mobilized to educate her daughter. This exercise helped to build her vision tree. Velammal presented her vision at the community meeting, and was honored when some of the common elements of her vision were accepted by the community in the community vision. It was the first time she had stood in front of the community in a common place and spoken about her achievements, strengths and future aspirations. Everybody praised her because she is educating all her children though she does not have stable income. She felt proud of her self and assured the community that her visions to build her own house, and educate her children to higher standards so that they can secure good jobs will be realised.

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