

# monaco

## BLUE INITIATIVE



PRINCE ALBERT II  
OF MONACO  
FOUNDATION



Oceanographic  
Institute  
Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation

## 11<sup>th</sup> Monaco Blue Initiative – Digital Edition

Workshop # 2 – 9 June 2020

*Lessons to be learned from community-led initiatives and civil society in the management and preservation of protected areas*

### Summary of the discussions

The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Monaco Blue Initiative, planned for March 2020 in Monaco, had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak. In the spirit of resilience and mobilization, His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco and the Steering Committee of the Monaco Blue Initiative wished to keep the momentum and offer a space for debating and making progress on the themes of the [11<sup>th</sup> MBI through three online workshops](#). Below is the preliminary summary of the second workshop.

**Moderator:** Ms Grethel Aguilar, Acting Director General, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

**Panelists:** Ms Haydee Rodriguez Romero, Vice Minister Water and Seas, Government of Costa Rica; Ms Esther Wolfs, Partner & Founder, Wolfs Company, The Netherlands; Prof Divya Karnad, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, Ashoka University, founder InseasonFish, India; Mr Marco Lambertini, Director General, World Wildlife Fund International; Mr Adam Miller, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Planet Indonesia & Edinburgh 2020 “Ocean Leader”.

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This 2<sup>nd</sup> online workshop of the 2020 Monaco Blue Initiative began with a keynote speech by Mr Andrés Couve Correa, Chile’s Minister for Science, Technology, Knowledge and Innovation. Panellists from Latin America, Europe and Asia then discussed their experiences with community-led conservation and offered recommendations for reconciling marine protection with sustainable livelihoods and economic activity.

In his keynote speech, **Andres Couve Correa** recalled that the Ocean – central to Chile’s identity – provides food, fuel, trade routes, recreation, tourism and scientific knowledge. It is our responsibility to sustain it for future generations.

Local communities were instrumental to establishing Chile's MPAs, which cover 43 percent of its Exclusive Economic Zone and include the Easter Island MPA, Latin America's largest. Covering 5.79 million km<sup>2</sup>, it began as a petition to government from the local citizens' council, formed in 2015 to structure conservation and sustainable use of Easter Island's ecosystems.

The resulting MPA is administrated by a joint council of Chilean Government and Rapa Nui community representatives. Species protected include blue, humpback and minke whales; the bottlenose dolphin; the mango shark, and many species of fish and birds. As a Multiple Use area, it allows activities including artisanal fishing, tourism, and research.

The Juan Fernández Archipelago is another example. In the 1980s, the local community established rules to protect the prized Juan Fernández lobster, regulating capture techniques, minimum size, and seasons. When industrial fishing became a major threat in the early 2000s, universities and NGOs joined forces with local fishermen to successfully petition for legal reform to ban it from protected areas. Starting in 2014, several protected areas were created in the Mar de Juan Fernández and today cover over 262,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Effective management of MPAs remains a challenge. Chile's Ministry of Science is developing a Climate Change Observatory to gather data to facilitate evidence-based policy-making, and ocean observation and monitoring will be one of its main components.

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Moderator **Grethel Aguilar** of the IUCN opened the panel by noting that the Monaco Blue Initiative's going ahead online sent a clear signal of continuing support for the ocean agenda despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coastal communities know that natural infrastructure and fisheries must be protected for them to prosper, and possess a wealth of knowledge and practices to enable that. They were already facing challenges such as plastic pollution and climate change; now, they are also confronting the health and socio economic effects of COVID-19, Ms Aguilar said.

Oceans must be part of the global recovery. The IUCN backs the expansion and networking of MPAs that engage local communities as the only sustainable path to healthy oceans and thriving societies.

**Professor Divya Karnad** teaches and conducts research at India's Ashoka University. She co-founded India's first sustainable seafood initiative, InSeasonFish. It assists small-scale fishermen to increase fisheries' sustainability while working with supply chains and consumers to develop supportive markets for their catch.

The global conservation community must do more to recognize and validate local and indigenous conservation strategies, especially in developing countries. While in the developed world marine protected areas typically depend on government decree and enforcement, this may not fit the reality elsewhere. Most of India's 133 state-declared MPAs are mere "paper parks" because the government has not been able to allocate the funding, training and technology needed to enforce them effectively.

In these contexts, MPAs may have to take different forms, Ms Karnad suggested. Her research and that of others working in the global south found that fishing communities were well versed with the spirit of protected areas but had their own ways of implementing them. In India, for example, small-scale or local community protected areas used a mix of strategies such as temporal fishing closures, spatial closures, or partial closures to certain types of fishing gear.

Unfortunately, these Community Marine Protected Areas, or CMPAs, were seldom recognized nor discussed at the global level. An important first step would be to help them to gain legal status – in India, fishermen have even been threatened with legal action for implementing protection measures.

Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that communities need diversified livelihoods that are resilient to global shocks – sole dependency on tourism, for example, cannot be the way forward. This

also requires supportive markets. Fishermen who adhere to community fishing closures have to catch whatever is ecologically available rather than going after the most valuable fish, but may have difficulty selling their catch.

InSeasonFish helped to shift market behaviour by working with supply chains, restaurants and consumers in support of sustainable fishers. Beyond this, there needs to be a concerted *global* effort to ensure markets feature ecologically determined rather than demand-driven harvests; this involves fishing management, supply chains and even diets and cultures.

Finally, providing income support may be a worthwhile investment for ocean conservation and wellbeing in poor coastal communities. In the first two weeks of India's two-month COVID-19 lockdown, supply chains broke down and small-scale fishers were unable to sell their catch, bringing some of the poor communities Karnad works with to the point of starvation.

Her team initiated a relief effort alongside state-provided rations. Once fishing was re-opened, many maintained closures of their own accord because they knew they could survive. This shows that for owner-operated fishing vessels, some kind of financial provisioning or Universal Basic Income could be a useful tool to increase community buy-in for MPAs.

**Adam Miller** is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of grassroots nonprofit Planet Indonesia. It fosters inclusive conservation, working with coastal communities to enable them to sustainably manage marine and coastal resources. He made three recommendations based on the organization's work within village-led partnerships that benefit over 17,000 people.

Firstly, the conservation community must prioritize participation of local communities, both as a means to an end but also as an indicator of success in and of itself. Successful marine conservation depends on the engagement of, and leadership by, local communities. Marine initiatives can no longer be designed in offices in Washington DC and then pushed on the communities of the global south.

Mr Miller's second recommendation concerned governance. The development of local, inclusive governance structures is key to the success of community-led conservation. These can be community groups, cooperatives, management associations and other platforms for decision-making and management. Such structures are crucial for mobilizing individuals and communities at a local level, but also for collaboration with state and other actors.

Planet Indonesia's work has shown that to be effective, we conservationists should view our role as facilitating a locally led process rather than implementing one ourselves. Another lesson is that gender issues and gender equality must be central to all community-led conservation initiatives.

Thirdly, the global conservation community must rethink design. This means moving beyond a system of large multinational NGOs whose impact is to self-replicate, towards a system that identifies local partners, local civil society organizations and on-the-ground entities and supports them in their marine resource management and conservation effort.

Planet Indonesia begins all projects by asking communities themselves to define sustainability, conservation, wellbeing and development. Definitions may be different than those accepted internationally; in many ways these are western colonial terms imported to the global south, he said.

The COVID-19 crisis has further revealed the vulnerability of MPAs that are not community-led and locally sustainable, as across the global south their international staff has been sent home, patrols are no longer active, and tourism has collapsed.

By revealing our failure to correctly and fairly involve communities in marine resource management, the pandemic is an opportunity for self-reflection. The new normal must be that we cease the endless top-down versus bottom-up debate among conservationists, and focus on impactful, inclusive solutions hand-in-hand with coastal communities. The future relevance of the field of marine conservation depends on it.

**Esther Wolfs** founded Wolfs Company to measure and communicate the benefits of investments in sustainable development and nature conservation. Working mainly in the Caribbean, it helps to balance the interests of communities, governments, civil society and the private sector by increasing transparency regarding trade-offs in the use and management of ecosystems. By contributing to mutual understanding, it can foster more effective and equitable marine use and conservation.

The entire sea around Bonaire is a marine protected area. As a famous diving spot, the island's waters are its biggest draw, and tourism is Bonaire's most important economic sector, providing 38 percent of its GDP. Islanders were aware of nature's contribution to their wellbeing, but concrete action to conserve the marine environment was poorly supported, leading to the deterioration of coral reefs.

Quantifying the local economy's dependence on healthy reefs made it tangible: a valuation showed that Bonaire's coral reefs were responsible for 74 percent of the added value in the tourism industry. As a result, the Dutch government allocated 7.5 million Euros to nature conservation in the Caribbean. Tourism actors, the local community and nature conservation organizations began collaborating on marine conservation initiatives, such as banning damaging sunscreen.

In a similar study of the socio-economic value of Aruba's marine and coastal ecosystem, 400 community members took part in a participatory mapping exercise identifying locations with high aesthetic, cultural and recreational value. This revealed a conflict with the government's plan to develop an area the community valued for its natural environment. Locals took this up with government and their concerns have now been incorporated in a revised spatial development plan.

The Cayman Islands offer another example. A large-scale survey demonstrated local support for increasing the Islands' marine protected areas, as a majority of Caymanians valued recreational activities such as swimming, beach-going and diving and considered a pristine natural environment central to their cultural identity. After years of research and close cooperation between the local government, citizens, NGOs and economic groups such as fishermen, the marine park areas were expanded.

Ms Wolfs also shared an example of balancing private sector business interests with those of a community. Her company analyzed the impact of a salmon farm in southern Chile on the surrounding marine environment and communities, revealing that local fishers attributed the decrease in their catch to the salmon company's activities.

Before the analysis, the aquaculture business thought it had a good local reputation because it sponsored many community events and programs. Thanks to this new understanding, it changed its strategy and invested in marine conservation in collaboration with the community, resulting in more effective efforts to protect the ecosystem.

COVID-19 is having a serious impact on conservation and the management of protected areas. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial to steer economic recovery funds and measures towards sustainable development. Long-term dedicated entities such as the MedFund Mediterranean conservation trust have an important role to play in this regard, she concluded.

**Marco Lambertini** of WWF International then offered the perspective of an international NGO working with communities on MPAs and ocean conservation. WWF is more a federation of local organizations, operating under local governance and leadership, he noted.

The sustainable management of marine coastal resources is key to achieving sustainable development goals. This involves many different stakeholders, interests, contexts and histories, and often leads to conflicts. It takes place within a complex and diverse socio economic reality, from traditional governance systems in more remote areas to urban zones of high population density or high immigration flows.

Coastal resources have suffered steep decline particularly over the last few decades, and sometimes at the hands of local communities. Many communities themselves go through a journey of discovery

from overexploitation to awareness and understanding, and then to an element of commitment and change.

Two elements are necessary to support that process of change. One is the recognition of rights. This is easier in places where traditional governance is able to balance those rights between community needs and marine conservation, but when that breaks down it's more difficult. Then the establishment of rights requires a concerted effort at the community, local and sometimes national level. International organizations and even business can help to support, facilitate, advocate, and broker relationships.

On Indonesia's Koon Island in Maluku, under strong traditional governance, the local community applied measures after seeing a decline in fish yields. They regulated seasons and techniques, while diversifying their economy. An older example is the Tuscan Archipelago National Marine Park where the local community obtained exclusive fishing rights.

In Tunisia's Gulf of Gabes, home to the largest continuous expanse of *Posidonia* seagrass, the community also took action in response to a decline in fish stocks, due mainly to competition from industrial fishing, by pushing the government to designate no-take zones surrounded by community-managed fishing areas. This has produced a visible increase in yields and now the Tunisian example is being replicated in other areas, in a country that has not yet designated any MPAs by law.

So clearly, when local communities take the lead and embrace conservation, the impact is far-reaching and lasting. Next year a lot of important agreements will be reached globally. This is an opportunity to embed concepts like community-led conservation in those agreements and perhaps to attach specific targets to those concepts as part of the overall vision of a carbon-neutral and nature-positive world, Mr Lambertini suggested. The opportunity to incentivize, promote and recognize these efforts in community-led marine and terrestrial conservation is one we cannot miss.

Minister **Haydee Rodriguez Romero** has broad experience working with MPAs and communities in Costa Rica and is now leading its ocean work. Ms Rodriguez began by noting that the COVID pandemic has exposed social inequalities but has also shown humanity's potential to work together to overcome crises and build a sustainable future that leaves no one behind.

Costa Rica is working on its Caribbean side with its first community-led MPA that incorporates the climate change variable while serving as a buffer against excess tourism and fishing activities.

Several elements are key to reconciling conservation and sustainable use to ensure ocean health, productivity and resilience. First is marine spatial planning to determine how activities are allocated within Exclusive Economic Zones, and linking that to areas beyond in the High Seas. Secondly, we need sound environmental impact assessments. A key challenge is to translate scientific information into public policy but also into common knowledge.

Catalyzing investment to finance conservation is key to creating a balance between use and protection of marine resources. Currently investment in nature is less than 3 percent of climate finance, which is not acceptable. Any economic recovery from now on should include sustainable and nature-positive initiatives, Ms Rodriguez said.

Costa Rica is working with communities to create MPAs and to develop business plans for them based on tourism and sustainable fishing. But we also need to create fully and highly protected areas – that's the only way we'll be able to keep oceans healthy for future generations. Costa Rica is leading the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People together with France to achieve 30 percent protection of the planet's oceans and land by 2030.

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## Questions and Discussion

**Bernard Fautrier**, Special Advisor to HSH Prince Albert II, began the discussion period by noting that Monaco also supports the High Ambition Coalition and all initiatives to improve the role played by MPAs everywhere.

Next up was **Dan Laffoley**, Marine Vice Chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas, who stated that future impacts from climate change would be as massive a shock to the global system as COVID 19. He called for MBI members to put together an action agenda and contact the Convention on Biological Diversity, the World Bank and others with five specific, new recommendations of what should be done differently to achieve a blue-green recovery and strengthen the resilience of MPAs and local communities as we emerge from the pandemic. This means moving beyond general recommendations, such as financing.

Haydee Rodriguez suggested working more with mangrove and coral reef restoration, and developing future MPAs based solely on climate change mitigation. It is also important to adopt a blue economy model involving all communities in the allocation of ocean activities, identifying the benefits and ensuring all activities respect very strict and sound policies.

COVID-19's impact is not equal across regions and classes, highlighting the need for more equitable and direct access to resources and benefits. These lessons should be applied to climate change, as it will present many other crises. Decarbonisation is one good way to change the unsustainable way we've lived all these years, she said.

Esther Wolfs called for helping MPA management to gain a more solid understanding of financials and to diversify their sources of income, so as to not be solely dependent on tourism, for example. Conservation trust funds should be vehicles to offset any sudden drop in income, and should be approached about setting this in motion.

Marco Lambertini responded to Mr Laffoley's question with what he termed "a few no-brainers". The first is to curb wildlife trade and consumption as fully and fairly as possible. This whole mess came from that and will come again if behaviour doesn't change.

Secondly, it is critical to fight back against attempts to deregulate— there's a very strong push from lobby groups and some regressive political forces to actually use this opportunity to roll back environmental standards. That's crazy and we should oppose it as much as possible.

More positively, there is an opportunity to fast-track green investment, as hundreds of billions of dollars in recovery funds will be invested in the next six to eight months. This is a real opportunity to remove perverse subsidies, support sustainable community-based artisanal fisheries, and look at infrastructure development in ways that don't harm the ocean. This is an opportunity we will not have again – hopefully – for some time, and one some decision-makers are beginning to take, he said.

Planet Indonesia's Adam Miller recommended urging large multilateral organizations to recognize community-based marine protection schemes. Failing to validate community-led conservation measures such as those based on indigenous law makes it hard for them to attract donors, who only want to fund state-led MPAs even when Locally Managed Marine Areas are more effective. He experienced this with an LMMA in Kalimantan next to an "official" MPA. Large donors and government agencies declined to fund the LMMA, despite fish biomass and livelihoods being considerably higher than in the MPA.

A related recommendation is to work more with supply chains to sell seafood sourced from LMMAs at a premium, giving communities a constant source of funding to manage protected areas without depending on donors.

Divya Karnad agreed: we have plenty of tools, but their broader adoption is being hindered by this lack of recognition. She suggested working to bring stories of locally grounded action to the ears of

multilateral organizations. Secondly, the conservation community must stand its ground at a time when many entities are pushing to reduce environmental norms and change policies.

Grethel Aguilar mentioned a recent essay the IUCN drafted with WWF and Queensland University on how communities and protected areas are being impacted by COVID. Many organizations are trying to highlight challenges communities are having globally, and aid must go in that direction.

**Masanori Kobayashi** from Japan's Ocean Policy Research Institute asked Marco Lambertini to enumerate the success factors for building consensus on marine spatial planning or MPAs based on his experience with the Tuscan MPA that granted exclusive fishing rights to the local community.

Inclusivity is key, Mr Lambertini replied, which implies a long consultation. The Italian government had a clear commitment to conserve these areas while favouring development of the small local fishing community. It is also important to build on the data this experience is providing: while only local fishermen can fish within the marine park, it has become a nursery replenishing fisheries outside the park, spreading the benefits beyond the local community.

There is no single rule, as every context is different, but the evidence that granting particular rights and responsibilities to support local communities benefits other constituencies is getting stronger and stronger. That should be a strong argument in favour of those decisions.

**Hemant Sondhi** of Monaco-based Scorpio Ship Management asked about the possibility of philanthropists "adopting" MPAs to support their sustainability and that of the livelihoods of local coastal communities.

Adam Miller noted there were terrestrial examples of long-term financing involving philanthropists and the private sector elsewhere but that Planet Indonesia had not been able to get philanthropists to support LMMAs. As a result, it has developed alternative ways to finance community-led protection schemes such as working with supply chains to obtain a premium for LMMA-harvested mud crabs while working at the community level to ensure some of that profit is used to manage the LMMA.

In Marco Lambertini's experience, philanthropy has been critical to kick-start a particular approach, whether an MPA or LMMA. But support must lead to a self-sustaining model for the long term because dependency on philanthropy is never a good long-term recipe.

Grethel Aguilar listed three elements with which philanthropy must comply: respect the rights and perspective of local communities, respect the country's procedures and laws, and invest in communities for the long run. Short-term, one-shot support rarely works well.

Divya Karnad noted that any philanthropic "adoption" requires investing not just financially but in getting to know the community and the entire system you're investing in. This is essential to ensure donors understand what results can be expected, and that they can meet expectations. If those conditions were met, this type of investment could be of great benefit.

**Thierry Chopin** from the University of New Brunswick suggested that Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture could provide sustainable livelihoods compatible with MPAs, as shown by **several** concrete examples from the Global South. Echoing Adam Miller about MPAs being an imported colonial concept, Chopin suggested the **Global** North should modify its attitude and learn from these examples.

COVID-19 is showing the importance of local coastal communities developing resilience with long-term, sustainable commitments and diversified sources of revenues. This makes the case for flexible MPAs rather than rigid structures closed 12 months of the year, and for a complete revision of existing funding and subsidy schemes, he said.

Adam Miller noted that community-based conservation was now being adopted more globally as a viable solution. Rather than debate whether top-down is better than bottom-up, the marine community should unite and focus on which enabling conditions on the ground or at government level

determine the type of protection that will work best in a given context, whether a state-led MPA or a community-led scheme. I hope and think we're moving on; today's conversation is an indicator that change is starting to happen, he said.

Before concluding the workshop, moderator Grethel Aguilar noted that while gender equality had not been discussed in depth, it must be a priority when working with coastal communities, where women are doing a lot of the work. These women need support to have a voice and be a visible force.

She noted that in some ways, thanks to online technology, COVID-19 has produced more dialogues among ocean actors than ever before, so this year may yet be a powerful one for marine conservation. The IUCN fully supports France and Costa Rica's High-Ambition Coalition backing the 30 by 30 initiative, to be achieved through a network of highly protected areas with no destructive or extractive activities. Full protection of 30 percent of the ocean is not sufficient, however – we must work together with communities and countries to achieve 100 percent sustainable use of our oceans, for the wellbeing of all.

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