

# FIJI CORAL REEF CONSERVATION PROJECT

## KADAVU PROJECT

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION – SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

### SIX MONTH PROGRESS REPORT

- Prepared by -

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## Background

Coral Cay Conservation has been working in Fiji at the invitation of the Ministry of Tourism since 2002. This work is under a three-year Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2002 and subsequently extended for a further three years in early 2005.

In addition to this official Project Partner, CCC also works closely alongside the Department of Fisheries of the Ministry of Fisheries and Forestry, the Department of the Environment, the Native Land Trust Board of the Ministry of Fijian Affairs and a range of local NGOs and academic institutes including the University of the South Pacific, the South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission, WWF-Pacific and the Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas.

To date, work has been conducted in the Mamanuca and Yasawa Islands off the west coast of mainland Viti Levu, in the Savusavu region of Vanua Levu and along the coastline of the Coral Coast. At a recent review held in Fiji in October 2005, it was estimated that CCC has now surveyed approximately 13% of the coral reef area of Fiji.

In addition to this scientific data collection, CCC has been closely involved in community and host country capacity building:

- A total of 23 Fijian nationals have undertaken the CCC scholarship programme (<http://www.coralcay.org/communities/sas1.php>);
- Eleven week schools programmes have been conducted at two district schools in the Mamanuca Islands for three consecutive years;
- Three one-week workshops have been conducted for postgraduate students at the University of the South Pacific on topics including GIS, coral reef surveys and data analysis;
- One thousand educational posters have been produced and distributed from a previous Small Grants Programme awarded through the BHC Suva.

This SGS funded work relates to the on-going commitment and expansion of CCCs work in Kadavu. CCC has been actively engaged in Kadavu since June 2005 and has maintained a staff team assisting the Kadavu Qoliqoli Management Support Team (KQMST). The KQMST are subdivision of the FLMMA (Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas) network.

KQMST was set up in early 2005 to help the local communities of Kadavu set up and manage MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) within their qoliqolis (traditional fishing grounds) with the primary aim of providing a better livelihood for future generations. In this area most of the MPAs have been set up in the 18 months since KQMST was established, however a few have been established for much longer. Kadavu has 33 qoliqolis and 26 MPAs, hence nearly every qoliqoli has an MPA - an achievement that in itself is great news and is not repeated in many other countries of the world. CCCs staff team have been assisting the KQMST undertaking surveys to compare the condition of the coral reefs in fished and non-fished areas (Marine Protected Areas). Additionally, CCC has been involved in training of the core KQMST team, enhancing the techniques that are used to provide a more holistic approach to the collection of data as well as presenting the scientific findings of the studies undertaken to each of the communities that have custody of the qoliqoli.

## Project Activity Progress to date

The progress made on the four key project activities up until the end of September 2006 is summarised below.

### **1. Training for Community Fish Wardens**

**Objective:** Provide training in scuba diving and reef resource survey and assessments, including MPA-orientated and practical scientific training in data acquisition, management, analysis and synthesis. Training will be offered primarily to each of the 30 or so communities at Kadavu.

A total of 10 Community Fish Wardens were successfully trained in scuba diving, reef assessment and monitoring, and data management. Eight of the participants were from Lau and were provided through collaboration with WWF while two were local participants from Dravuni Island village. The names of the WWF participants were Iaitia Vakatawa, Jone Halafi, Juita Vakau, Ana Takayawa, Feskato'a Elizabeth, Isimeli Salote, Soqo Mere and Sauya Valu with Raijeli Bola and Rusila Pone being the Community Fish Wardens from Dravuni.



*Fijian Community Fish Wardens Raijeli Bola (foreground left) and Rusila Pone (one back from foreground right) undergoing training in fish identification skills.*



*Community Fish Warden Raijeli Bola receiving one-on-one training in the identification of hard coral by Amy Tamblin (Community Liaison Officer)*

## **2. Training scholarships for USP students**

**Objective:** Provide four-week training scholarships for USP students. The training programme will be similar to those offered to Community Fish Wardens but with an expanded curriculum in the technical components of data processing and management

To date, a total of four USP students successfully enrolled onto and completed the CCC technical training scholarships. In addition to these activities held by CCC at its base of operations on Dravuni Island, two one-week workshops have been conducted by CCC science staff at the University aimed at increasing technical capacity within the University graduates to enable coral reef conservation activities to be widened.

## **3. Reef Awareness Field Trips**

**Objective:** Marine awareness field trip visits to the CCC base at Kadavu will be provided for parties of children from each community, where they will be provided with interactive reef awareness educational activities, including snorkelling excursions to local coral reefs

Six sets of snorkelling equipment have been purchased to date. Each class at Dravuni Island primary school have to date been given a minimum of 12 hours contact time with the Community Liaison Officer. Topics covered in the sessions have included the importance of coral reefs to the socio-economic well-being of the community, basic coral reef ecosystem ecology and the links between coral reefs, seagrass beds and mangroves. In addition to these theoretical classroom based sessions, each class has been taken on a four guided snorkel tours around the reef adjacent to Dravuni

Island to assist in the understanding of the interdependencies of the reef inhabitants and some of the factors that can influence coral overall coral reef health.



*One of the classes from Dravuni Island primary school that has been included in the coral reef awareness programme.*



*School children from Dravuni Island primary school following an amateur dramatics presentation given to the community on the importance of coral reefs to the continued well-being of the community.*

As part of the nation wide ‘splash for trash’ and international ‘dive into Earth days’, all of the school classes included in the programme had a class-room based session on the threats posed by solid waste pollution in the marine environment together with steps (such as recycling) that can be taken to reduce this problem. Practical work on these days included beach and foreshore cleanups. As a result of these programmes and with the assistance of CCC, recycling bins have now been sited at key locations throughout the community and with the assistance of Yaukuve Island resort, the solid waste collected is now transferred to the mainland for recycling.



*School children from Dravuni Island primary school making a poster at the start of the national splash for trash activity.*

#### **4. Resort Support**

**Objective:** Provide resort staff provided with skills training opportunities to enhance their guests appreciation, enjoyment and understanding of the importance of healthy coral reefs in protecting income and livelihoods for local communities and stakeholders alike.

This activity has not been addressed in the first six months of the project.

#### Difficulties and Obstacles Experienced

##### **1. Training for Community Fish Wardens**

Of the ten Community Fish Wardens trained to date, eight have come through CCCs partnership with the NGO- WWF with two having been sought from the local

community directly. This is indicative of one of the largest hurdles to the Community Fish Warden training programme where the level of spoken and written English and the motivation for the individuals applying has to be determined. With the recruitment of the Community Liaison Officer, a system of vetting candidates through interviews and written processes has now been put into place. There are currently six additional Community Fish Warden candidates from within the local communities that are due to undertake training in the forthcoming months.

## **2. Training scholarships for USP students**

The periods of the year during which scholarships can be taken by USP students is limited primarily to outside of teaching semester times. Accordingly, there has been a limit on the number of scholars that have been able to take part in the scholarship programme. There is currently a recruitment process on going at the University with an aim of enrolling as many as possible over the Christmas period.

## **3. Reef Awareness Field Trips**

The schools programme and awareness field trips conducted to date have been very successful. With only one small school on Dravuni Island however, the numbers of children involved have by definition been limited. The first six months of this grant period have given chance to refine what activities are undertaken with the school and there is currently plans in place to expand the programme to the school on the neighbouring island of Buliea.

In addition, towards the end of 2006, CCC plan on establishing a satellite base on Ono Island closer to mainland Kadavu. This base will allow extension of the areas over which surveys are being conducted and being close to far larger primary schools and the large provincial school in Kavala Bay, it is anticipated that the reef awareness field trips can be expanded considerably.

## **4. Resort Support**

The only resort within 15kms of Dravuni Island is Yaukuve Island Resort. At the time of the awarding of this grant, Yaukuve was to be operational in August 2006. However logistical difficulties by the resort construction teams have meant that this timeframe could not be adhered to. Accordingly, the quantity of planned resort support activities could not be carried out in the first six months of the grant period.

With the rescheduled opening of Yaukuve Island Resort now planned for early 2007, there has been a lot of interest expressed by the resort management team in the resort support activities offered and it is expected that these activities will be carried out as planned.

In addition, with the planned establishment of the satellite base on Ono Island, the number of tourism operations that can become recipients of the resort support activities offered will greatly increase.

## Financial Report on Expenditure

Fifty-two percent of the F\$21,400 supplied to this project by the British High Commission Small Grant Scheme has been spent in this first six month period of the project. The table below indicates the larger capital expenses incurred to date.

In addition to these expenses, CCC has provided an estimated F\$28,000 in support in kind through accommodation and food for Community Fish Wardens and USP scholars totaling 420 person-nights.

Item	Unit cost (F\$)	Quantity	Expense (F\$)
Divers Alert Network insurance policy for Community Fish Wardens	180 (Aus\$140)	10	1,800
Fuel for return boat trips (Dravuni-Suva) to collect Community Fish Wardens	600	5	3,000
Professional Association of Dive Instructor (PADI) Open Water and Advanced Open Water teaching resources	406	10	4,060
(PADI) Open Water and Advanced Open Water certification fees and cards	81	20 (10x OW & 10x AOW)	1,620
Purchase of snorkel equipment for Reef Awareness Field Trips	110	6	660
			11,140