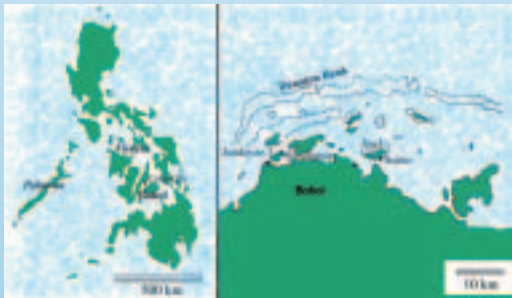


COMMUNITY-BASED COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

By ensuring community involvement in coastal resource management, fishers are able to take control of their livelihoods, sharing responsibilities with government agencies to maintain healthy fish stocks. Project Seahorse Foundation for Marine Conservation is a non-governmental organisation that has been working with local fisher families in the Danajon Bank region of the Philippines to manage better their coastal resources. The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) co-founded Project Seahorse in 1996 and has continued to work as a partner, with ZSL staff providing expertise in marine ecology and social development.

A fishers' alliance

A map of the Philippines on the left, with a close up of the island of Bohol on the right. The dotted line depicts the Danajon Bank double coral reef.



In 2002, as part of the socio-economic work funded by the UK's Big Lottery Fund, consultations were undertaken with the poorest fishers in the region, the lantern fishers, to identify the key issues that affected their livelihood security. These were as follows:

1. Smaller catches due to over-collecting, and environmental degradation caused by illegal fishing activities.
2. Poverty and a lack of alternative livelihood sources.
3. The dependence on middlemen for marketing fish catches.
4. The lack of a seahorse population management plan.

To tackle these issues, the fishers recognised the need for strict enforcement of fishing laws; development of sustainable new livelihoods; and the conservation of natural resources. In order to implement these activities, it was agreed that a lantern fishers' alliance would be established in the northern Bohol province.

As interest and commitment to marine conservation by the fishers grew, the idea to expand the alliance to a Danajon

Bank-wide organisation of lantern fishers emerged. This would bring together four neighbouring provinces - Bohol, Cebu, Leyte and Southern Leyte to develop a marine resource management plan for the sustainable use of the coral reefs. In July 2002, KAMADA (The Alliance of Lantern Fishers in Danajon Bank) was formed. In 2003, membership was widened to all fishers and KAMADA is now a federation of fishers' organisations with over 540 members and is composed of 16 independent *barangay* (village) level people's organisations.

ZSL through Project Seahorse supports KAMADA in organisational development and leadership capacity-building. With this support, KAMADA has developed a three-year strategic plan including its vision, mission statement, goals and annual operational plans.



Three Jandayan Island lantern fishers return after a night of lantern fishing using a small amount of gear to catch seahorses and other fish.
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Cyanide is used as an illegal fishing method to catch reef fish in the Danajon Bank.

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Tackling illegal fishing

KAMADA, with support from Project Seahorse, has established dialogue with the Local Government Units (LGUs) with regard to illegal fishing in the area. In 2003, KAMADA compiled a list of fishers involved in illegal fishing on the Danajon Bank. This consolidated list was presented to the Governor of Bohol Province. In response, KAMADA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Governor, which enabled members of KAMADA to be deputised as fish wardens. Through working with the LGUs, KAMADA has the authority to help control illegal fishing. Since then, at least three illegal operators have been apprehended, cases against compressor divers filed in court and illegal fishing totally stopped in Sagise barangay.

Marine Protected Areas

The KAMADA chapters in Sinandigan and Sagise villages established three new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in order to build up diminished fish stocks. Project Seahorse facilitated the establishment of the MPAs in conjunction with barangay officials, Bohol Environmental Management Office and the municipal LGUs. Government funding has been secured for their management by KAMADA. The initial results of the biological surveys and monitoring undertaken by Project Seahorse indicate that the health of the coral reef and fish stocks is now recovering.

Sustainable fisheries

KAMADA has been working closely with Project Seahorse to develop a management plan for the seahorse fishery that would enable the sustainable harvest of these species, which are largely exported for the traditional medicine industry. A minimum size limit (10cm) has been adopted in at least five KAMADA chapters and is now an international fisheries management recommendation. Also, KAMADA has actively pushed for the amendment of the Philippine Fishery Code to allow for the sustainable use of species currently listed in Appendix II and III of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species). Trade in these listed species is currently banned in the Philippines.

KAMADA now serves as a critical link in the Danajon Bank connecting resource management efforts with fishers and their families. Through collaboration with local and national government and non-governmental organisations, the fishers and their families are striving to protect their natural resources and thus benefit from increased livelihood and food security.



Fisher families benefit from increased livelihood and food security.

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Partners: Project Seahorse Foundation for Marine Conservation, University of British Columbia, John G. Shedd Aquarium, University of Tasmania

Donors: The Big Lottery Fund, John G. Shedd Aquarium

ZSL Contact: cp@zsl.org

Tel: +44(0)20 7449 6304

Fax: +44(0)20 7483 4436

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