



SUCCESS STORY

Island Youth Work to Secure Their Future

Youth Club educates, monitors and trains for conservation in Malaysia

The young people of Banggi Island, located in the proposed Tun Mustapha Park in Sabah, Malaysia, are taking responsibility for their own futures by dedicating themselves to environmental issues affecting their communities. Their work began before 2006, but their efforts gained momentum in 2009 when support from World Wide Fund for Nature-Malaysia (WWF) through USAID’s Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP)



enabled them to officially register as the Banggi Youth Club (BYC), making it possible for them to establish and fund programs. Now, this vibrant 150-member group conducts a broad range of activities such as community education, reef monitoring, beach cleanups, alternative livelihood projects and school presentations.

Under their Green Lifestyles project they have developed five educational modules—anti-plastics, anti-fish bombing, mangrove reforestation, composting and recycling. In the past year, they travelled around the large island of Banggi, population 20,000, and neighboring islands visiting primary and high schools and dozens of communities. The results of their efforts include a 25% reduction in use of plastic bags, a 40% increase in recycling, integration of their Green Lifestyles modules into the high school after-school curriculum, and a ‘No Plastic Bag Friday’ in Karakit, the main town on Banggi.

Banggi Youth Club members Siti Nuruda, Siti Noraidah and Sarmalin Sakirun are “reef check certified” and teach the Green Lifestyles modules at schools and in communities.

Photo: USAID CTSP / Tory Read

BYC also runs programs for young children using puppet shows, painting and drawing to get the conservation message across. They became local honorary environmental wardens to keep an eye on “no take zones” and sponsored weaving training so local women can earn money from mats and bracelets instead of selling fish. Most recently, club members learned diving and reef monitoring skills and then set up monitoring transects in key marine areas to record changes in the fish, coral and substrate. Three young women—Siti Noraidah, Siti Nuruda and Sarmalin Sakirun—are particularly taken with the undersea world. “I like diving,” said Siti Noraidah. “I like seeing the animals and the coral. I like recording everything. The sea is so different from the land, it’s peaceful and calm down there.”

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– Siti Noraidah, Banggi Youth Club

There are many things about the work that club members like—gaining work experience, raising awareness, working with kids, learning to speak in public, teaching, traveling to other communities, sharing their knowledge with family and friends—but it is seeing the effect of the work that keeps them going. “Our vision is to see all Banggi people living a green lifestyle,” said Mohammed Yusuf, current leader of BYC. USAID’s support for the Coral Triangle Initiative on Corals, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) has enabled these young people to become leaders, brightening the future for them and their communities. *WWF is the lead implementing partner for CTSP and the USCTI Support Program in Malaysia.*



SUCCESS STORY

From Fishers to Weavers

Women in Tun Mustapha Park use weaving to earn income for their families



The women of Maliangin and Banggi islands are using palm leaves, traditional skills and recycled plastic bottles to make handicrafts that earn additional income for their households.

Photo: USAID CTSP / Tory Read

“I’ve used the money for fixing up the house, for house-keeping and food. I got a phone, too.”

— Nafsah Indami, Maliangin Island

The women of Maliangin and Banggi islands in Sabah, East Malaysia, have a long tradition of weaving with the leaves of the *pandanus* palm, but the skills required to harvest, prepare, dye and weave the leaves was vanishing. With the fisheries declining and food security threatened, household budgets were pinched and the women needed to help make ends meet. When World Wide Fund for Nature-Malaysia (WWF)

through USAID’s Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) came to this area inside the proposed Tun Mustapha Park and talked about alternative livelihoods to help take the pressure off the sea, everyone connected the dots. Together they planned to revive and adapt a weaving program that would enable the women to earn income for household needs and sell less fish.

WWF brought in a weaving expert from peninsular Malaysia to teach interested women. The women knew the basics of weaving necessary for make sitting and sleeping mats, but they needed help creating designs for marketable items. At a series of three trainings held in Karakit, the area’s main town, they learned to make baskets, file folders, placemats, bracelets and other small items to supplement the mats. They also learned what color combinations and patterns might be

appealing to the tourist and urban markets. New dyes in earth and pastel tones were made available to them to supplement the brighter locally available ones.

Nafsah Indami from Maliangin Island beams when talking about the income earned by her family since 2010. She specializes in woven bracelets and bangles and estimates she has earned 500 ringgits (about \$170) in the past year. She can make five items a day between her other obligations and can sell these for 5 ringgit (\$1.70) each, in line with the national minimum wage. “I’ve used the money for fixing up the house, for house-keeping and food. I got a phone too,” she said with a broad smile and a laugh. The women are now recycling plastic bottles by cutting them into circlets around which they weave broader bracelets. They sell their products to ecotourists visiting the area and hope to sell more items to stores in the cities.

Recently, the weavers in Banggi got a contract to weave 1200 napkin rings for the Shangri-la Tanjung Aru resort in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah’s capitol city. The resort is also interested in selling other *pandanus* products such as placemats and coasters in its shops. Skills have increased and an initial market for the products is now established, laying a solid foundation for a profitable future for the women. This is easing pressure on the fish and reefs in accordance with the local livelihood goals of Malaysia’s commitments as part of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF). *WWF is the lead implementing partner for CTSP and the USCTI Support Program in Malaysia.*



SUCCESS STORY

A New Perspective on Fisheries in Malaysia

Sabah adopts an ecosystem approach to fisheries management



Dr. Norasma Dacho and Rayner Datuk are working hard to incorporate elements of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) into the planning and policies of the Department of Fisheries (DOF) in Sabah, located on the island of Borneo in eastern Malaysia. Both are learning the principles of EAFM at regional and national

workshops conducted by the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) and supported by USAID. Based on the information and new insights gained from these workshops, they are now including diverse stakeholders in fisheries management and evaluating the long-term effect of different methods on the sustainability of fish populations.

Rayner, the Director of DOF-Sabah, has been with the CTI-CFF program right from the start, and he currently chairs the CTI-CFF Regional EAFM Working Group. Under his leadership at the national level, the ongoing work to gazette a proposed 1.02 million hectare marine area called Tun Mustapha Park features an integrated marine and coastal management plan that embodies EAFM principals. His hopes for the future include EAFM training at the community level, incorporating a Malaysian

A significant percentage of the fish sold at the Kota Kinabalu market comes from unsustainable fishing practices now being addressed through Ecosystem Approaches to Fisheries Management by the Sabah Department of Fisheries.

Photo: USAID CTSP / Tory Read

“It is very useful to integrate needs of all levels in planning. The principles allow all stakeholders to talk together.”

– Dr. Norasma Dacho, Sabah Department of Fisheries

interpretation of EAFM into national legislation, establishing a funding stream for EAFM implementation and adding a cabinet position for EAFM to the government. At the regional level, “Malaysia wants to use EAFM to work with its neighbors to jointly address problems with the live reef fish trade and other marine resource management issues,” he said.

The CTI-CFF regional exchanges on EAFM are also valuable for Dr. Norasma, the Head of the Conservation and Natural Resources Branch of DOF-Sabah. The networking, sharing and learning keep her motivated about her work and introduce her to new ideas. The success of her Philippine government counterparts in working directly with their fishermen and communities on planning and enforcement for marine protected areas is one such idea. “It is very useful to integrate needs of all levels in planning,” she stated. “The principles allow all stakeholders to talk together.” Dr. Norasma says that Malaysians now are thinking differently about how to solve environmental issues, applying EAFM not just to fisheries management, but to all marine conservation issues. For her, EAFM is the future for every level of society: coral reefs for the environment, fisheries for business and food security for everyone.

Senior government officials like Dr. Rayner and Dr. Norasma are making great use of the new information they have gained through CTI-CFF activities to help guide Malaysia into a more sustainable future from well-managed fisheries. *WWF is the lead implementing partner for the USCTI Support Program in Malaysia.*



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SUCCESS STORY

A Marriage of Sustainability and Profit

Live reef fish traders join together in Sabah for conservation



Tiam Song and Susie Tsen are in the live reef fish trade, shipping certain species of fish alive to Hong Kong for resale to restaurants throughout China. They understand that their businesses depend on treating the sea, the reefs and the fish with respect. In return, the sea will yield its bounty of fish to them and to other fishermen. In 2003, the

SARS epidemic in China temporarily halted demand for their fish. This gave them time to take stock. They had already noticed that it was taking longer to catch fish and that large fish were harder to find. Tiam Song and Susie Tsen and many other live reef fish traders were aware of the damage done by fish “bombing,” by the illegal use of cyanide to stun fish and by the bottom trawlers that destroy reefs and capture every creature big and small. They saw the terrible condition of the reefs and sea floor in their fishing areas, and they realized there would be no future for them or their heirs unless they took steps to shift to sustainable practices. Tiam and others took temporary measures such as using aquaculture-grown fish instead of wild-caught fish, and ecosystem-friendly fishing gear, but lasting solutions would require more information and an organization to influence governing bodies to control unsustainable trade practices.

Live reef fish trader Susie Tsen is concerned about the long-term viability of her business. She is working with other traders to protect and restore the fish stock.

Photo: USAID CTSP / Tory Read

“The association helps us traders speak together with one voice.”

– Susie Tsen, Sabah Live Reef Fish Traders Association

The fish traders turned to Irwin Wong of WWF Malaysia, working through USAID’s Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) and the national Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF). Irwin, himself from a local fish-trading family, knows the business from top to bottom, and he helped Tiam, Susie and others form a Live Reef Fish Traders Association in Sabah. “The partnership with WWF brings a lot of benefit because the fishermen only see their own perspective, but WWF sees the ecosystem approach and works all aspects of fisheries,” said Tiam. “The association helps us traders speak together with one voice.”

Susie is one of only a few women in the live reef fish trade in Sabah. She learned from WWF about the consequences of fish bombing and the use of cyanide, and, as a result, she insists her boats use lines and traps. She has participated in most of the meetings between the traders association and Department of Fisheries Sabah, which she considers the key to addressing the issues.

Building on the trade association work in Sabah, the Malaysian government and live reef fish traders met in Bangkok in March 2013 with representatives from Indonesia and the Philippines to discuss the benefits of forming a regional live reef fish trade forum. With support from USAID’s CTSP and WWF, the live reef fish trade is working together with governments to marry profit and sustainability in the Coral Triangle. WWF is the lead implementing partner for CTSP and the USCTI Support Program in Malaysia.



SUCCESS STORY

Spreading the Word on Integration

Sabah professor embraces and teaches new conservation ideas to her students in Malaysia

Sometimes a single event can fundamentally change a person’s thinking. For Dr. Ejriah Salleh, who works at the Borneo Marine Research Institute at the University of Malaysia Sabah (UMS) in Kota Kinabalu, a meeting on climate change adaptation was such an event. The meeting—a USAID-funded regional exchange organized by the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF)—changed the way she thinks about

research, climate change, ecosystems and communities. Dr. Ejriah received her formal training in physical oceanography and coastal protection. Malaysia’s national coordinating committee for CTI-CFF selected her to represent Malaysia in the regional climate change adaptation meetings focusing on coastal change.

The effects of climate change on marine and coastal resources were new concepts to her, as were ideas about community roles in conservation and coastal management. She was a quick study. “I’ve learned that it is important to involve community in conservation and resource management because they are there, they are the ones with the problems,” she said. “We really need to educate them on how to conserve. Once we change their way of thinking they can take care of and know and appreciate the environment.” She added that she also relished the chance to meet like-minded people from different countries to compare experiences and learn new facets of the coasts.



Fishermen like these from communities in the proposed Tun Mustapha Park in Sabah stand to benefit from Dr. Ejriah’s efforts to integrate people, physical and biological sciences in coastal resources management.

Photo: USAID CTSP / Tory Read

“I’ve learned that it is important to involve community in conservation and resource management because they are there, they are the ones with the problems.”

– Dr. Ejriah Saleh, Professor, University of Malaysia Sabah

With World Wildlife Fund-Malaysia, a partner in USAID’s Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP), Dr. Ejriah helped conduct Coastal Integrity Vulnerability Assessments with the CTI-CFF Local Early Action Plan (LEAP) tool at two key Marine Protected Area (MPA) sites in Sabah, including the proposed Tun Mustapha Park (TMP). She also joined a group of scientists on a 2012 marine research expedition in TMP, jointly funded by Malaysia’s Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation and CTSP. As a member of the sea bottom survey team, she evaluated the level of damage to reefs by trawling and dredging and identified places with healthy fish populations. The information gathered on the expedition is entered into Malaysia’s National Oceanographic Data Center’s database and will be used in finalizing the integrated management plan for TMP.

Dr. Ejriah is unequivocal about the value to her and to Malaysia of her participation in the CTI-CFF regional exchanges. Her focus has broadened from a narrow physical scientific view to an understanding of the critical importance of a holistic and integrated coastal and marine resource management approach. “Now, I don’t just do research on the ocean, I try to cover everything from the top to the community level,” she said. “And an integrated approach means involving the community, and that has helped me think about applying my research. Before I did my research, analyzed my data, wrote a paper, and that was that.” She has changed her thinking, and she is spreading the work to her colleagues and students. *WWF is the lead implementing partner for CTSP and the USCTI Support Program in Malaysia.*



SUCCESS STORY

Let's Make It Legal

Malaysia's largest marine park moves closer to gazettelement



Residents from Maliangin Island are among the first to create a community-managed marine protected area within the proposed Tun Mustapha Park, and they are eager for final approval of the park.

Photo: USAID CTSP / Tory Read

"We must have TMP. It will validate everything we have been teaching. Enforcement will be better, government involvement higher, the fish will rebound faster. It will help us realize our vision—all Banggi living a green lifestyle."

— Sarmalin Sakirun, Banggi Youth Club

The proposed Tun Mustapha Park (TMP) is 1.02 million hectares and includes more than 50 islands and 80,000 inhabitants. TMP is situated in a key eco-region, where the Sulu and Sulawesi Seas meet at the northern tip of Borneo, and it is a priority area for the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF).

Although stakeholders in Sabah have been working since 2003, the progress on the park plan accelerated dramatically when assistance from USAID's Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) enabled Sabah Parks and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Malaysia to conduct planning, community consultations and zoning work that led to the formation of an interim secretariat at Sabah Parks and an interim steering committee tasked with overseeing the gazettelement and doing all the work required to prepare the park. "This is not business as usual, this is a large marine park, and it requires many consultative activities with many stakeholders from the top management of state government to the bottom—the communities," said Ludi Aspin, assistant director and head of park management and operations for Sabah Parks.

Ludi's biggest challenge is the zoning plan for the park, because everyone has to agree on it, including the government, communities, fishermen and traders. He is proud to be applying Ecosystems Approach to Fisheries Management concepts in the management plan. Ludi and his staff work closely with WWF on both technical and practical aspects of this process, including GIS, surveys, trainings, planning and consultations in the hundreds of communities that are located within the proposed park's boundaries. "Besides protecting and conserving, there must be utilization, and fisheries is just one component of that," he said. This type of integrated marine and coastal resource management takes time, and it relies on the work of someone like Park Officer Augustine Benson, whose position was created with CTSP funding. Augustine staffs all of the working groups for the interim steering committee, and he has a clear view of next steps to establishing TMP. "We'll need a permanent steering committee, field staff training, more scientific data to help management decisions and capacity building at the community level," he said.

The gazettelement of TMP, anticipated for 2015, will be a proud moment for Malaysia. Sarmalin Sakirun, who lives within the proposed park on Banggi island and works with the local youth club on environment awareness campaigns, said it best. "We must have TMP. It will validate everything we have been teaching. Enforcement will be better, government involvement higher, the fish will rebound faster. It will help us realize our vision—all Banggi living a green lifestyle." *WWF Malaysia is the lead implementing partner for CTSP and the USCTI Support Program in Malaysia.*



SUCCESS STORY

Champions at the Top Make Change Possible

Malaysia’s leaders commit to sustaining marine conservation in the Coral Triangle



Dr. Nor Aieni of the National Oceanographic Directorate is an inspirational leader for the national level CTI-CFF work that is bringing Malaysia closer to realizing the goal of sustainable fisheries.

Photo: USAID CTSP / Tory Read

“As scientists, what we can do is make sure we link data to solutions.”

– Prof. Dr. Nor Aieni, National Oceanographic Directorate

It takes champions to sustain marine and coastal conservation efforts, and Malaysia has many. One is Dr. Nor Aieni Binti Haji Mokhtar, Under Secretary at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI). MOSTI is the focal point for Malaysia’s work on the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF), and Dr. Nor Aieni oversees the National Oceanography Directorate (NOD) there.

She is a modest, highly capable and adaptable woman whose enthusiasm and energy play a significant role in Malaysia’s ongoing CTI-CFF story. “I’m trained as an ocean modeling physicist and coastal engineer,” she said. “With CTI-CFF, suddenly I’m learning about fish and MPAs and community livelihoods, which is all so interesting, and as scientists what we can do is make sure we link data to solutions.”

NOD is tasked not only with coordinating the collection and dissemination of scientific data needed for good marine and coastal resource management, but also with synchronizing the efforts of the government agencies, NGOs and communities and making sure that the country’s program aligns with regional CTI-CFF work. Under the direction of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) and Dr. Maximus Johnity Ongkili—Minister of MOSTI and current chair of the Regional

CTI-CFF Council of Ministers—Dr. Nor Aieni and her staff help the diverse national ministries coordinate on complex, multi-disciplinary issues. NOD also administers the funding allocated to advance the goals in the CTI-CFF National Plan of Action (NPOA).

Malaysia’s NPOA outlines the steps the country plans to take through 2015 to address the environmental issues threatening its fisheries and food security. One important theme is integrating an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) into marine and coastal resource management. EAFM includes taking into consideration such ideas as the life cycles of fish, the impact of terrestrial activity on the sea and the welfare of the communities dependent on marine resources. “The issue of food security and fisheries has caught the attention of the government, and the EAFM framework is something really useful to help us address this,” stated Dr. Nor Aieni. “We’ve formed the EAFM National Steering Committee to apply it to our needs.” On other fronts, NOD has commissioned research on climate change impacts in the proposed Tun Mustapha Park marine protected area in Sabah, Eastern Malaysia.

Malaysia is the first Coral Triangle country to ratify the agreement towards establishing the Permanent Regional Secretariat of the CTI-CFF. In Malaysia, the government has integrated its NPOA activities into the national budget through 2015, thus ensuring that the country’s work in marine and coastal resource conservation under CTI-CFF will continue into the future. *WWF Malaysia is the lead implementing partner of the USAID-funded Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) that supports the efforts of Malaysia’s National Coordinating Committee.*