



Nature's Investment Bank: marine protected areas and poverty reduction

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Methodologies

Site selection

- 4 sites were selected where local experts believed the MPA had contributed to poverty reduction. “Positive deviance” approach

Triangulated data

- Focus group discussions and key informant interviews
- Comparison with nearby control sites without a marine protected area
- Local perceptions of changes over time

Poverty Focal Areas

- Opportunities, Empowerment and Security

Summary of findings

The 4 marine protected areas clearly helped reduce poverty.

The poverty reduction came from:

- Increased fish catches
- New jobs
- Better local governance
- Benefits to health
- Benefits to women



Summary of findings

Navakavu, Fiji

- Fish catches increased dramatically and incomes doubled
- Women were the primary beneficiaries

Arnavons, Solomon Islands

- Better local governance resulted in greater government support for fisheries and basic health care
- New jobs in seaweed farming and in the MPA
- Better health due to a more diversified diet and the use of the MPA boat as an ambulance



Summary of findings

Bunaken, Indonesia

- ~1,000 new jobs in tourism and incomes double the average income of fishers
- MPA fishers spend half as much time to catch same amount of fish as non-MPA fishers

Apo Island, Philippines

- Greater fish catches
- New jobs in tourism (many of them for women) boosted local incomes
- Better health from a full-time midwife and more frequent doctors' visits

Success factors

- Local management or co-management of marine resources
- Outside organization to catalyze the marine protected area
- New income activities to ensure the local communities benefited tangibly in the short term

Recommendations

Invest in new MPAs. Like a school or a health clinic, there are modest short-term costs but big long-term gains.

Empower local communities. Co-management and community management of local marine resources lowers costs and improves outcomes.

Think small but integrated. A network of smaller marine protected areas that are ecologically connected and co-managed by local communities has significant coastal poverty reduction potential.

Food for thought...

- 35 countries
- 39 million citizens
- 40 million visitors
- Each island with unique biodiversity – some found nowhere else
- The sea provides food and sustains livelihoods
- Threats abound – invasive species, coastal development, climate change

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“The marine protected area is like a bank to the people,” Fijian community leader. Opening more branches of the “bank” in developing countries can contribute to coastal poverty reduction.

www.nature.org/mpapovertystudy