

# Study on Effectiveness of Locally Managed Marine Protected Areas and Involvement of Different Stakeholders in Lauru, Choiseul Province : A Case Study Analysis between Zinoa and Parama Marine Protected Areas

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## 1. Research Background and Purpose of Presentation

The Solomon Islands is a country where the majority of the rural dwellers resided near the Coast and therefore depended very much on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods (Figure.1). The coastal marine resources provided them with food, income and employment, however, coastal marine resources are threatened and in need of immediate attention to safeguarding them. To address these issues the government, NGOs and local communities established MPAs and Locally Managed Marine Areas together with other initiatives to protect the marine resources from these threats. Despite the growing number of MPAs as management tool, there remains a lack of effective management as shown from past reports.

This study aims to continue on with MPA reports, by revisiting MPA management networks and compare two Locally Managed Marine Protected Areas in Lauru, Choiseul Province in Solomon Islands. Analyze the reasons for the lack of effective management and the involvement of different stakeholders in co-managing MPAs. Then analyze the opportunities Local MPAs can create to invest in Fisheries in the country.

Parama and Zinoa MPAs were selected for the purpose of this study because these two MPAs were among the list of first locally managed MPAs in Choiseul Province but were both managed by different group of local communities. Parama is owned and managed by Poroporo Association which is a registered local Association. The Association members were chosen to be the members of the Parama Conservation Committee. However, poaching has always the case experienced at Parama by the people of Poroporo village where most of the Association members resided. On the other hand, Zinoa with most other MPAs were owned and managed by a tribe who owned that particular MPA area. However, Zinoa is one of the well managed MPA in Choiseul Province apart from other similar MPAs.

Therefore, the study sees it fit to share how effective these different groups of local communities manage their MPAs and the reasons behind ineffective management.

## 2. Method of Study

This study is based on analysis from established and proposed policies, regulations, and past research reports on Marine Protected Areas in Solomon Islands. Then an in-depth interview has been conducted in December 2019 in Lauru. The key informants include NGO workers, National and Provincial government officials and local communities of Zinoa and Parama that engaged in MPA Management.

### **3. Discussion and Conclusion**

Over the past years The Nature Conservancy (TNC) one of the International Non-Government Organizations has worked with the Lauru Land Conference of Tribal Community (LLCTC) a local registered NGO to establish Community-based protected areas around Choiseul Province. Nine Community based protected areas were successfully established in 2008 and there was an increase of interest shown from other communities to declare their areas as protected areas through this partnership work. To date, there are 24 Locally Managed Marine Protected Areas in Choiseul Province (Fisheries and Marine Resources, Solomon Islands).

The main reasons why Parama and Zinoa communities want to establish their areas as Marine Protected Areas is to ensure marine resources are sustainably used for the present and the future generation and as well as to provide a ground where they can benefit from financially and at the same time conserve their resources for food security. There are many different levels of management measures/approaches and the two common protection in MPAs around Lauru were a No-take and Open and close seasons MPA. No-take MPA is where Fishing and harvesting marine resources are not allowed, but people can travel through the area and use it for recreation, such as sightseeing and snorkeling. For Open and close seasons the area is protected, but some fishing activities allowed on certain times. Usually open seasons took place when the abundance of resources is evident and as well as during special occasions.

The MPA management approach practiced in Solomon Islands involves different stakeholders from the government, NGOs and local communities having different responsibilities in co-managing MPAs. Stakeholders' involvement and responsibilities keep the MPAs and LMMAs to run its management measures and practices. Different stakeholders co-managing MPAs build and establish relationships between different sectors from private to national and international organizations.

According to IUCN, a successful MPA management involves balancing bottom-up and top-down approaches (Kelleher, 1999). Therefore, every players or stakeholders from the national to the provincial government and down to the local communities has an essential role to play in MPA management. The main players in managing MPAs in Choiseul Province are the local communities and past reports shows that a good support from local communities leads to success in any resource management plan. Poor support from local communities can create a less attractive environment for investments like eco-tourism in tourism industry. The Provincial Government and National Government provided legal frameworks and regulations to guide Conservation and management of resources.

However, there are also challenges faced by different stakeholders that may alter the management of MPAs in the long run. This study includes a lack of continuous financial support from NGOs and government for both MPAs, and lack of monitoring, enforcement, and compliance by the resource owners and users of Parama MPA. The Solomon Islands although recognizes customary rights there is still lack of clearly incorporating these rights into the national legislations.

### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

In conclusion, effective management requires the full participation of the different stakeholders in Co-managing MPAs. The Zinoa and Parama MPAs although managed by different local groups they both require better governance that will promote stewardship that demonstrates the social, economic, and environmental benefits for the local people. Therefore, more engagement

of the local communities in the management process is of great importance and should be considered in recognizing these traditional rights in the Provincial and National levels. The involvement of different stakeholders also will improve the continuous partnerships and ensure maximizing benefits for all partners especially the locals. This management style also offers a platform for local communities to decide on the use of their resources and what they want to create and invest in the resources that their protected areas have to offer provided that the government render assistance and support. Establishing Locally Managed Marine Protected Areas also will help policy makers design and develop safe guidelines for the marine areas when it comes to development activities such as logging or other construction activities.

Therefore, increase support, dedications, and commitments from the national, provincial and local communities should be encouraged for successful and effective MPA management is encouraged in this study.



Figure.1 Map of Solomon Islands and Choiseul Province