



# SUCCESS STORY

## An Ecosystem Approach to Marine Conservation

### *Pere village in Manus adopts integrated resource management*



The island community of Pere in Papua New Guinea, separated from the main island of Manus by a narrow channel, is at the forefront of marine conservation and climate adaptation. The community is among the first in the country to apply the “ridges to reefs” concept promoted by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a partner in USAID’s Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP). Pere’s success is kindling a flame in other Manus communities and around the Bismarck Sea through CTSP and the six-country Coral Triangle Initiative for Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF).

The story starts in 1997, when provincial fisheries authorities visited Pere to raise awareness about the Live Reef Food Fish Trade’s exploitation of fish spawning sites. When Pere villagers understood the threat of these activities to their livelihoods, they created “no take” zones in key areas. In less than a year, local fishermen saw improvements in their catch, so they put more sites under management and created a locally-managed marine area. Pere wrote a marine resource management plan in 2006 to govern the LMMA. The local government that oversees Pere heard about the village’s success, and a year later, it adopted an Environment and Conservation Law that recognized the community’s right to manage its marine resources.

The community of Pere depends on the sea, and its people are applying EAFM principals to manage their resources.

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– Piwen Langarap, Program Coordinator, MECCN

Meanwhile, local youths learned to monitor the reefs, and Pere worked through a long consultative process to create a village governance committee that everyone respected and followed. In 2010, CTSP funds supported new trainings in Pere on climate change and on the “ridges to reef” approach to conservation. As a result, community members realized that managing their fish was not enough. “When you want to look after the fish to increase populations, you also must look after the ecosystem, the mangroves and the reefs,” said Piwen Langarap, a Pere community member. “The people in the mountains must look after what they do, because what they do in the river ends up in our marine area.”

To make a broader plan that incorporates this Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM), Pere took the lead to bring communities from up-river into its management and training process. Coastal villages routinely trade fish with inland neighbors for garden and forest crops. Once the inland people realized that their behavior directly affected the fish they depended on, the communities became partners in conservation. In 2013, Pere launched a new, integrated resource management plan that incorporates climate change, “ridges to reefs” and Marine Protected Areas—all designated as key conservation activities under PNG’s CTI-CFF National Plan of Action. And the National Fisheries Authority, part of PNG’s CTI-CFF National Coordinating Committee, pitched in by donating a fish aggregation device, or FAD, which takes the pressure off inshore reefs by luring pelagic fish and fishermen to the area around the device.

Pere’s multi-faceted approach is yielding noticeable results. Fish are spilling over from healthy “no take” zones into surrounding open areas. Mangroves and sago are coming back, and neighboring communities are learning what they can do to address their own issues. *TNC is a lead implementing partner for CTSP and the USCTI Support Program in Papua New Guinea.*