



SUCCESS STORY

Paradise Saved

Supporting traditional marine conservation in Papua New Guinea



Leonard Bamaba, Marida Ginisi and Kidilon Bamaba are leaders in the family that now combines traditional and contemporary conservation practices on Wiyaloki Island in Milne Bay.

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— George Aigoma, CI

The ideas behind community-based resource management are not new to the Kisakisa clan, owners of Wiyaloki Island in Milne Bay Province, Papua New Guinea. Since 1997, matriarch Marida Ginisi and her brothers Kidilon and Leonard Bamaba have used *bubuli* traditional practices to control fishing and harvesting on their reefs. They place temporary bans on the collection of specific species in certain areas by decorating a pole with coconut fronds and capping it with a sample of the forbidden item. This system has allowed them to rebuild fisheries that had been depleted under the oversight of previous generations.

When the family learned of the community marine management area around Nuakata Island, which was created with assistance from USAID’s Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP) in support of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF), they saw an opportunity to respect tradition while modernizing management and enforcement. “Wiyaloki was doing their own management long before CI came to them,” said George Aigoma, who leads community engagement for Conservation International (CI), a CTSP partner in Milne Bay. The improvements around Wiyaloki drew the interest of the two nearby islands of Nautale and Panabala, and together these communities requested CI to help them take similar actions. They have now completed training for monitoring reefs and fish, taught by three men from Nuakata who took the original CI training classes. They have begun monitoring 16

sites, and they are already noticing increases in coral and fish in the “no take” areas.

Of the monitoring training, Kidilon said, “We learned about the types of fish, clamshells, and corals. They are good teachers. They taught us in a way where they took us down to the reef plenty times and showed us each thing.” The best students were selected to do the monitoring. They are now eager for further training so that they can pass on the techniques to other communities that are asking to be included.

Kidilon, who went through the trainings along with his son, is now the chairman of the Community Marine Management Area for the three islands. He coordinates the quarterly monitoring, oversees patrolling of the “no take” zones and plans for the future. He has spoken with the elected manager for his local government district about adopting an environmental law like the one passed with CTSP support by the neighboring Maramatana local level government, and he is leading community work on a management plan, in collaboration with CI. All of this work in monitoring and resource management planning is directly linked to Papua New Guinea’s CTI-CFF National Plan of Action.

Marida’s family members drew a line in the sand and committed themselves to the regeneration of the marine resources around their home. The success of their efforts convinced their neighbors to join them and to formalize management of the resources. Now, they are working together to keep the reefs healthy and productive for future generations, and they are disseminating marine protection ideas throughout the neighboring islands. *Conservation International is a lead implementing partner for CTSP and the US CTI Support Program in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea.*