

Shortlisted Target Project Proposal

Project: Love for the Sea: Empowering Indigenous Women through Coral Restoration

Organization: Caribbean Coral Restoration Center (CCRC)

Location: Solarte Island, Bocas del Toro Archipelago, Panama



Description of the Project

CCRC created its Love for the Sea project to restore the fragile coral ecosystem in the region by building an indoor seed bank and coral breeding laboratory and to foster economic empowerment by employing the local indigenous Ngäbe people in its activities. A key feature of the project: constructing a new, indoor seed bank lab to replace the outdoor breeding facility (vulnerable to damage during inclement weather), thereby dramatically increasing the capacity to raise coral seedlings for transplant. The organization depends upon a savvy mix of locally based staff and volunteers.

Impacts

Impact on the environment/climate: The health of the Bocas de Toro coral reef ecosystem is strategic. As the oceans warm, reefs deteriorate, resulting in decreased protection against storm swells as well as lower fishing yields, protein consumption and incomes for the local Ngäbe people. In addition, as livelihoods decrease, their children are denied access to schools because they cannot afford required uniforms and supplies.

Addressing gender equality: Women in Bocas's indigenous communities are typically unemployed. The project offers employment and pay equality for local women in every aspect—education, training, and employment—as seed bank and lab technicians and as scuba divers constructing artificial reefs and out-planting.

Supporting the community: 43% of Boca residents live in poverty. By rebuilding the coral reef—creating artificial reef structures on the ocean floor, conducting genetic research into resilient reef species, growing seedlings, out-planting onto artificial reefs, monitoring fish population growth and sharing data with the international coral community—fish populations return and livelihoods improve. Training of indigenous women as employees as well as awareness-raising activities in communities and schools will increase local knowledge of environmental issues.

Achieving/reaching sustainability: CCRC predicts that given relatively low labor and maintenance costs, once constructed, the lab has the potential to provide sustainable employment over the long-term.

SDGs addressed: (using UN icons):



Budget: \$140,000

84% of funding will go to construction of the lab, 9% for administrative costs. Reinforced accounting and reporting systems are to be developed.

Proof of Concept:

- (2016–2022) CCRC’s outdoor nurseries produced enough coral clones to repopulate over 3 hectares of seafloor practically devoid of marine life. Today, that zone is thriving. To offset some costs and to ensure the long-term sustainability of its coral breeding activities, they organize public awareness projects (tours, dives, partnerships with local ecotourist groups, school presentations...).

Proposed Marketing Support for Clubs:

- A full range of ideas and funding possibilities presented: a site visit, program slide deck, and marketing materials for FAWCO TP5 chair. A listing of donation possibilities spans a range of price points (for example, \$100 = part-time wages for one woman lab worker; \$1,000 contributes to equipment—water quality sensor, monitors, etc.; \$5,000 = an option for a club or individual to adopt an artificial reef structure). Updates provided to named sponsors.

For additional information, you are invited to learn more about the organization by visiting the Love for the Sea website <https://loveforthesea.com> and its multiple social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube). You may request a copy of the application by contacting Tharien van Eck, Target Selection Chair at target-application@fawco.org.