



Steve Rocliffe

Blue Ventures Report:
Madagascar fisheries partner
exchange, August 2016

Visit report

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Front page: Fishing from a colourful pirogue, Madagascar; photo: Garth Cripps.

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1. Summary and visit overview

A decade ago, in a remote corner of southwest Madagascar, Blue Ventures supported the village of Andavadoaka to temporarily close a small reef to octopus fishing to see if this might boost declining catches. When the closure was lifted a few short months later, fishers caught far larger octopus — and far more of them. So impressive were the results, that before long, nearby villages were establishing closures of their own, and starting to think about more ambitious marine conservation efforts. Within three years, Andavadoaka had joined forces with two-dozen neighbours to create the Velondriake locally managed marine area (LMMA) in which reserves permanently off limits to all fishing were established and practices such as poison fishing were banned.

This use of short-term closures as a “foot in the door” for conservation has since grown along many hundreds of kilometres of Madagascar’s coastline, reaching around 150,000 people and inspiring a grassroots marine management movement that has seen 65 LMMAs established to date, covering 11% of the island’s seabed.

Buoyed by the success of this approach, Blue Ventures has begun to strive for impact at scale, embarking on a new journey to reach three million people across the world’s tropical coastal regions, by supporting partners to implement approaches that have worked for BV, including octopus closures.

In August 2016, more than a decade on from the first closure, we took our first major step on this new journey, inviting new partners from Zanzibar, Mozambique, Mayotte, Kenya and India to Madagascar to learn more about our work, to see the closures and LMMAs for themselves, and to use these experiences to spark new octopus closures and LMMA movements back home.

Over the course of 10 days from 15-25 August 2016, representatives from five new partner organisations visited key field sites in Madagascar, accompanied by several octopus fishers and a documentary filmmaker. The partners were supported by BV field staff in Madagascar, as well as by technical specialists from the UK, Belize, Mozambique, and Indonesia.

The visit coincided with the reopening of several octopus reserves, allowing participants to witness the increased catches that resulted, as well trying their hands at spearing octopus. During their time in the field, participants also snorkelled at one of the permanent reserves, visited BV’s sea cucumber and seaweed farms, and attended a full-day training workshop, before heading for home, armed with new knowledge and experiences to help scale and sustain closures in new places, and committed to a nascent octopus closure practitioner network to share best practice and accelerate progress.

All presentations from the visit can be downloaded from goo.gl/0qiOST.

2. Visit itinerary

Day	Activity	Comments
Mon 15 August	Arrival in Antananarivo and formal welcome dinner	Overnight in Cheval Blanc hotel, close to airport in Ivato
Tue 16 August	Fly from Antananarivo to Toliara. Meet 4x4s and drivers, who will stay with us until the 22 August	Overnight in Albatross and Escapade hotels.
Wed 17 August	Full day travelling by 4x4 through famous spiny forest to Andavadoaka 150km north of Toliara	Stay overnight in local guesthouses, with all meals provided by the Women's association, ensuring that funds are reinvested into the community
Thu 18 August	Guest briefing on Andavadoaka, health and safety and logistics, followed by a morning of presentations in BV, monitoring and evaluation and PHE. Late afternoon village tour led by BV staff	Stay overnight in local guesthouses
Fri 19 August	Octopus reserve opening day. Early morning boat transportation to nearby island of Nosy Ve to meet local octopus gleaners, then on to Nosy Massay reef flat to see the closure reopen and to catch some octopus	Stay overnight in local guesthouses
Sat 20 August	Group split into two, with one part visiting the permanent marine reserve of Agnorodriake to snorkel and the other visiting sea cucumber and seaweed farming operations at Tampolove, 90 minutes to the south.	Stay overnight in local guesthouses
Sun 21 August	Presentations from each partner group in the delegation about their work, followed by a Q&A.	Stay overnight in local guesthouses
Mon 22 August	Full-day 4x4 back to Toliara via Morombe	Stay overnight in Toliara at Albatross and Escapade
Tue 23 August	Full-day training workshop on how to set up and sustain an octopus closure at hotel L'Amazone.	Stay overnight in Toliara at Albatross and Escapade

	Evening farewell drinks/meal	
Wed 24 August	Return flight to Antananarivo. Afternoon tour of the town and evening meal	Stay overnight in Cheval Blanc
Thu 25 August	Depart Antananarivo	

Table 1. Itinerary for fisheries partner exchange visit, August 2016

3. Attending partners

The five partners who attended are detailed below. New partners from Indonesia (LINI and FORKANI) did not join, principally because octopus fisheries management is at an earlier stage.

1. [Kuruwitu conservation and welfare association](#). KCWA is a membership association of coastal community members living on the southern Kenyan coastline about 35 kilometres north of Mombasa, working together since 2003 to create a small permanent marine reserve and establish alternative livelihood initiatives.
2. [Mayotte Marine Park](#). Mayotte Marine Park is a large multi-use marine protected area established in 2010 to protect the seas around Mayotte. Mayotte is a French department that is geographically part of the Comoro Islands archipelago. The park itself is run by the The Agence des aires marines protégées, a French government department.
3. [WWF Mozambique](#). WWF is the world's leading conservation organization, and works in 100 countries. WWF's approach combines global reach with a foundation in science, involves action at every level from local to global, and ensures the delivery of innovative solutions that meet the needs of both people and nature. WWF opened its office in Mozambique in 2001, and has since identified 35 outstanding places for its direct action and focus.
4. [Marine cultures](#). Marinecultures.org is a non-profit organization headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland with a branch in Zanzibar. Marine Cultures uses aquaculture development projects (principally sponge farming and coral farming) to support and foster know-how for the establishment and expansion of environmentally sound, sustainable harvesting of sea resources in coastal communities, which are highly dependent on fishing.
5. [Caress](#). Caress has a programme of work in the [Lakshadweep islands](#), a string of 36 coral islands to the west of the Southern tip of India, north of the Maldives. 95% of Lakshadweep's population are scheduled tribes. As such, all visitors to the islands require a special permit, and all but 3 are closed to foreigners.

4. Workshop report

The partner visit concluded with a full day workshop held at L'Amazone Hotel in Toliara on 23 August 2016 between the hours of 10am and 5pm. The workshop was designed to be an interactive, informal, reflective session on what the future looks like for octopus fisheries management in partner organisations, what some of the challenges are, and what actions need to be taken to progress towards achieving visions

Workshop structure and itinerary

The workshop consisted of four sessions: Commitment, Barriers, Vision and Support. A fifth session – Feedback – took place at a later date because the forms were online and the Wifi at the venue was malfunctioning

1. *Commitment*: Based on what you've seen, are octopus closures or octopus fisheries management approaches that will work for you in your context?
2. *Barriers*: What are the barriers and challenges to adopting octopus closures/fisheries management in your organisation and context?
3. *Vision*: What actions are needed to progress towards your vision of octopus fisheries management in your organisation?
4. *Support*: How can we help you to make your vision a reality? What information, materials and support do you need?

The workshop itinerary is detailed below in Table 2

Time	Session
10-10.15	Welcome presentation by Steve Roccliffe (SR)
SESSION 1: A COMMITMENT TO OCTOPUS FISHERIES MANAGEMENT	
10.15-10.30	2021 Vision: what does the future look like for you? Group thoughts
10.30-11.00	Reflections on the visit: what have you learnt and what do you want out of the day? Post-it note exercise in partners
SESSION 2: WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES TO ADOPTING OCTOPUS FISHERIES MANAGEMENT?	
11.00-11.30	BV's barriers and challenges presentation by SR
11.30-12.00	<i>Coffee break</i>

12.00-12.40	What are your barriers and challenges? Knowledge Cafe Part 1 – table discussion
12.40-13.00	What are your barriers and challenges? Knowledge Cafe Part 2 – general discussion
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
SESSION 3: TOWARDS A PLAN FOR OCTOPUS FISHERIES MANAGEMENT	
14.00-15.00	Group plan development exercise: 2021 Milestones
SESSION 4: MAKING THE VISION A REALITY — HOW CAN WE HELP?	
15.00-15.30	BV's vision for future partner support. Presentation by SR
15.30-16.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.00-16.45	Carousel brainstorming in small groups on three topics: resource library materials; ODK support; and structure of network
SESSION 5: FEEDBACK: WHAT'S BEEN LEARNT AND WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	
16.45-17.00	Feedback forms
17.30	Celebratory cocktail

Table 2. Itinerary for fisheries partner workshop, 23 August 2016

Welcome presentation

SR kicked off the day by giving an overview of the day's goals, agenda and housekeeping, and reminding participants about BV's journey to rebuild tropical fisheries and the role of octopus closures in achieving this.

Session One: commitment

After publicly restating their commitment to octopus fisheries closures, participants split into pairs to brainstorm:

- a) the three most important things they had learnt during the visit;
- b) the one most important thing they hoped to get out of the day.

Pairs wrote each response on a Post-it note and added it to the appropriate board. Once every pair had done this, the group crowded around the two boards and aided SR to categorise the responses into different themes.

Three most important things learned during the visit.

The responses to this question fell into five broad themes

- a. *Seeing is believing* – closures work: “a way to deliver better financial benefit to fishers”
- b. *Conservation plus* – that the closures can catalyse conservation “important not to consider closures in isolation. Need to integrate with local conservation and monitoring”
- c. *Networking* is vital at all stages and among all actors. “Networking is king”
- d. *We need to monitor*. “Collecting the right data is really important”
- e. *Community involvement*. This was the theme with the most responses. Seeing our work in Andavadoaka made participants appreciate the need for a high quality “communities first” philosophy. “Must develop details plans together with communities”; “developing trust and good communication with communities is crucial”; “participatory processes and democratic decision making are very important”

One most important thing you hope to get out of the day.

All of the responses were things that we were already planning to cover. The focus was very much on understanding what the support from BV would look like (the final session of the afternoon)

Session Two: Barriers and Challenges

In this session SR first presented the results of the [Oliver et al](#) paper using the [infographic](#) developed to coincide with publication of the paper in mid 2014. After this, he went on to elucidate the 12 barriers and challenges we’ve faced with our own octopus management work, before concluding with a look at the six factors we believe need to be in place for octopus closures to be unequivocally successful.

Following this, the delegation split into their organisational groups and spent 30 minutes discussing some of the barriers and challenges to implementing octopus fisheries management and octopus closures in their context, before prioritising the top 3 and reporting them back to the whole group.

The outputs from this session are summarised below, with the top three challenges highlighted in bold. Overall, the challenges are surprisingly heterogeneous, underscoring the need to use the introductory workshop for information gathering and workplan development, and to tailor any training to the individual organisation/context.

No.	KWCA (Kenya)	Marine Cultures (Zanzibar)	CARESS (India)	Mayotte Marine Park	WWF Mozambique
1	Lack of reef space/fishing grounds in which to hold a closure -- especially because of seasonal fishing	Difficult to reach the whole community	Octopus sites are scattered across different islands separated from each other	Dealing with poaching	High community dependence on marine resources
2	High live hard coral cover on reef flats	Challenging to initiate the project without it being seen as an outsider initiative	There's no systematic data available on the octopus fishery	Limiting access to closure area	Resistance to change
3	Lack of eco-friendly gears	Village is very varied. There are several fisher groups and no unity, making it challenging to form a committee	There's no legal instrument for setting up closures and customary law is not recognised	Lack of knowledge about how to maximise community involvement, efficiently disseminate information to them and convince sceptics	Culture -- habits and customs
4	Difficulties in adapting Malagasy local management structures to the Kenyan context	There is no Dina in Zanzibar, making it challenging to enforce a closure at the community level		No defined landing and data collection site	Past experiences: voluntary and temporary closures have failed before
5	Lack of a feasibility study	It's hard to introduce data collection because the landing site is 8km long		No rules/legal framework that can be used to enforce closures	Climate change impacts
6	Lack of community awareness	Relationship with govt is an issue with bottom-up			Inadequate legal/surveillance framework in support of community-led

		initiatives like this			closures. Poaching by migrant fishers a problem
7	Cultural perceptions. It's the men who do the octopus gleaning in Kenya.	Lack of funding past year 1			Government authority is underfunded
8	Lack of finance	Low stakeholder awareness			Reef flats are not that close to the villages and so not easy to enforce
9	Lack of land space for alternative livelihood activities				Limited market access and low value
10	Illegal fishing gears				
11	Weak law enforcement				
12	Difficulty of equitable benefit sharing in community				

Table 3. Participant barriers and challenges to implementing octopus fisheries management. Fisheries partner workshop, 23 August 2016

Session Three: Five-Year Vision

In the first session after lunch, the delegation again split into their organisational groups and worked on a high-level five-year vision for octopus closures and supporting activities that would overcome the barriers and challenges they'd previously identified. Participants were told to assume funding throughout the five-year period. The resulting plans are summarised below

Partner	2021 Vision and supporting activities
Marine Cultures	<p><i>Vision:</i> 17 closures by 2021 (1 closure in 2017; 2 additional closures in 2018; 4 additional closures in 2019; 5 each in 2020 and 2021)</p> <p><i>Supporting activities:</i> establish programme of awareness raising about closures in target communities, work with community to define rules, plan management</p>

	and enforcement and plan technical organisation of closures. Launch mobile data collection and work on returning results to the community as fast as possible. Research and evaluate market and value chain for octopus
WWF Mozambique	<i>Vision:</i> replication of octopus closures in Mozambique. 2016: awareness activities; 2017: 2-3 closures and evaluate their effectiveness; 2018-2021 replicate in P&S and other areas of Mozambique. <i>Supporting activities:</i> Develop CBOs to target women, research markets and value chains, ensure fishers are supportive and introduce mobile monitoring
Mayotte Marine Park	<i>Vision:</i> Have closures operational in all 17 districts of Mayotte by 2021. 2016: 1st closure taking place from 15 September to 15 December. 2017: 2nd closure; 2017- replication in other villages in other districts <i>Supporting activities:</i> pot trials, poaching prevention activities, ban on gleaning while diving or snorkelling, develop community monitoring methodology
KWCA	<i>Vision:</i> none defined. 2016: launch 6-month educational awareness programme (six months); undertake survey to determine closures; 2017: develop management plan; 2018: launch first closure and use impact to catalyse interest from other communities in Kenya
CARESS	We used the session to flesh out the nature of our partnership, which had been a key outcome of the day for them. We've tentatively agreed to a plan of work that will see octopus closures implement on Minicoy island in 2017 and awareness raising and mobile catch monitoring and assessment on Agatti island

Table 4. Participant barriers and challenges to implementing octopus fisheries management. Fisheries partner workshop, 23 August 2016

Session Four: Making the vision a reality

In the final session of the day, SR presented BV's vision for partner support, including an online partner platform, resource library and data centre.

After this, the delegation split into three groups. The groups rotated around three flipchart stations, brainstorming what support from BV would be most helpful to them. Each station had a different topic:

- ii) ODK support;
- iii) Resources for the online library;
- iv) Network development.

At the first station, participants had 15 minutes, 10 at the second station, and 5 at the final station. Marc Fruitema (BV Belize), Anouk Neuhaus (BV Mozambique) and Claudia Matzdorf (BV Indonesia) each accompanied a group and acted as facilitator and note taker. At the end of the carousel session, SR revisited each station with the group and collectively prioritised the most important resources for development. For the network, we agreed an ideal structure and objectives. The outcomes are listed below in Tables 5,6 and 7, one for each theme.

Resource	Priority
Continually updated buying guide covering which tablets, smartphones and waterproof cases to buy	1
Funding to buy tablets and smartphones	-
Video-based training curriculum explaining how to set up and use ODK	-
Video-based training curriculum explaining how to switch from paper methods to mobile ones	-
Library of forms	6
Clear protocols on what to monitor and how often	-
Field training course to train community-based data collectors	4
A virtual network allowing community data collectors to share experience and best practice	5
An app to allow partners to develop their own forms	2
Advice guide on security settings on mobile phones to make sure they're only used for data collection	3

Table 5. Partner priorities for resource development: mobile fisheries monitoring. Fisheries partner workshop, 23 August 2016

Resource	Priority
Training course on how to write successful project proposals	3
A generic BV presentation that partners can present to govts etc to explain they're working with BV	5
Library of successful project/grant proposals	4
Library of contracts/MoUs/agreements with fishers, commercial partners, govt bodies etc	6
Library of awareness raising materials -- videos, posters etc	-
Monitoring protocols -- both in water(?) and at landing sites. What and how to monitor to demonstrate success/failure	-
BV media library of shots that partners can use in their work with proper attribution	-
Outreach materials in different languages (esp. Swahili)	7
Guide to engaging seafood collectors and exporters, including strategies for market development and perhaps a generic business plan	1
Video-based training guide covering all aspects of the closures. Some participants were particularly keen on seeing something like the Fish and People series	2

Table 6. Partner priorities for resource development: resource library. Fisheries partner workshop, 23 August 2016

Initiative	Details
In person meetings (every two years)	Ideally held to coincide with a closure reopening and perhaps with a different partner hosting each time. Participants should include new partners as well as existing ones.
Webinar (annually)	A webinar was preferred to a video conference because it more easily allows for recording, and findings and outcomes to be documented and made available afterwards
Online platform: Q&A forum, email list/chat function (ongoing)	All members invited to a closed group where they can interact with each other and post questions, suggestions and answers. To start with, a simple Google Group would suffice, but perhaps it's worth developing something as part of the partner portal. One suggestion was that in future, it would be great to have forums dedicated to specific aspects and moderated by a BV expert for that topic

Table 7. Partner priorities for networking and communicating with partners. Fisheries partner workshop, 23 August 2016

Participants also agreed on the overall objectives and activities of the network

- To exchange ideas, best practice and monitoring protocols
- To share challenges and barriers and how they were overcome for different contexts
- To learn from each other's experiences, practices and processes for developing, implementing and evaluating octopus fisheries management and closures
- To facilitate fisher-to-fisher learning

Appendix 1: Workshop participant List

First name	Surname	Email	Organisation	Location of Fishery
Karani	Andaza	karani.andaza@aires-marines.fr	Mayotte Marine Park	Mayotte
Armando	Cremildo	acremildo@wwf.org.mz	WWF Mozambique	Mozambique
Garth	Cripps	garth@blueventures.org	BV	Madagascar
Zainabou	Fakihi		Mayotte Marine Park	Mayotte
Marc Louis	Fruitema	marc@blueventures.org	BV	Belize
Charlotte	Gough	charlie@blueventures.org	BV	UK
Mohammed Mrisho	Haji	okala@marinecultures.org	Marine Cultures	Zanzibar
Vineeta	Hoon	vineetahoon@gmail.com	CARESS	India
James Tsofwa	Kaingu	kcomacp@gmail.com	Kuruwitu	Kenya
Camille	Lecat	lecat.camille88@gmail.com	Mayotte Marine Park	Mayotte
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Zaoudjati	Sidi		Mayotte Marine Park	Mayotte
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