BACKGROUND

While the management of Tubbataha was still being custom-fit after its declaration as a no-take marine protected area in 1988, several organizations took turns in carrying out awareness campaigns for the park. The defunct Tubbataha Foundation, an NGO composed mainly of SCUBA divers and the private sector based in Manila, was tasked to mobilize funds and to conduct awareness activities through a Memorandum of Agreement with the DENR. Beginning in 1995, a local NGO, Saguda Palawan, Inc., which was a member of the Presidential Task Force on Tubbataha was assigned to conduct information, education and communication (IEC) activities. This included the development and distribution of brochures in English and Filipino, conduct of pre-departure briefings on dive boats, and the identification of the current TRNP logo.

When WWF – Philippines started its work in Tubbataha in 1997, awareness initiatives were conducted, mostly maximizing special occasions in the community, and production of information materials for tourists. In 1999-2004, it implemented the Tubbataha Conservation project co-funded by GEF-UNDP and the David and Lucille Packard Foundation. This started the development of the conservation awareness program which was later on adopted in the TRNP Management Plan of 2003.

In 2005, a participatory evaluation on the implementation of the TRNP Management Plan was conducted which included the evaluation of the IEC activities. Though there were clear achievements of objectives, the evaluation recommended the tightening of the IEC activities into a more coherent program. Thus, in 2006, another participatory workshop was conducted and came up with strategic approaches to meet the IEC objectives. Primary audiences were analyzed and matched with the appropriate messages and communication tools. When the Tubbataha Management Office (TMO) was created in 2001, it took the full responsibility of managing the park, but initially focused on enforcement and administration of the TRNP.

Beginning in 2003, TMO gradually assumed the implementation of the conservation awareness program with WWF-Philippines taking a supportive role. In 2008, CI Philippines enabled the formulation of a 3-Year IEC Plan (2008-2011). The New 7 Wonders of Nature campaign, an online global search for natural wonders, served as the springboard for these information activities in 2008. Over the years, a more streamlined program for school and coastal visits was developed.

Table 1. Matrix of target audiences for Tubbataha with key messages and IEC tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Audience &amp; Messages</th>
<th>Identified Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fisher folks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fisheries value of TR</td>
<td>Public Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Update environmental laws</td>
<td>Paralegal Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participation in law enforcement</td>
<td>Information Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promote non-extractive and non-destructive livelihood options</td>
<td>Radio guestings, Radio plugs, Video clips on scientific research results, Handouts/fliers on scientific research results, Livelihood Manuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

There were four management programs expressed in the TRNP Management Plan in which all activities for Tubbataha are based. These are: Conservation Management, Conservation Awareness, Ecosystem Research and Monitoring and Sustaintable Resource Management.

The objective of the Conservation Awareness Program, as specified in the TRNP Management Plan is:

“to promote awareness, generate support, and achieve voluntary compliance with regulations. It seeks to foster a holistic view of the park ecosystem as an interrelated and interdependent system, and thus engender a sense of stewardship towards the marine environment. Conservation awareness activities will cater to the general public, with special focus on children and the youth.”

The two strategies identified to achieve these objectives are: a) the conduct of public outreach activities; and, b) development and distribution of information materials and other products. The re-branding of the TRNP and targeting audiences at the international level were activities identified during the TRNP Management Plan review in 2011. The accomplishments of these goals hopes to lead to the achievement of TPAMB’s vision for Tubbataha:

“A World Heritage Site that is effectively conserved to maintain ecological integrity contributing to the equitable distribution of benefits and sustained socio-economic development of present and future generations.”
WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED FROM 2008-2013

The implementation of the previous IEC Plan has been responsive to emerging issues, challenges and opportunities. In this regard, not all activities were conducted as planned, while some unplanned activities were undertaken. The IEC approach was strategic, focusing more on the audiences with direct access and impact on the wellbeing of the Park such as, the fisherfolk, tourists/private sector, and the youth.

Conforming to the two strategies for IEC identified in the TRNP Management Plan, TMO was able to carry out the following IEC initiatives with the support of various organizations. These are: WWF-Philippines, CI-Philippines, Global Mala Project, US Peace Corp, Provincial Government of Palawan, DENR and Pilipinas Shell Foundation, Inc. A summary of the IEC activities accomplished from 2008-2103 is presented in Appendix 1.

Strategy: Conduct of Public Outreach

1) School and Coastal Barangay Visits
The public outreach activities conducted in the past five years was directed towards children, the youth and fisherfolk in Puerto Princesa and other municipalities in Palawan, including the neighboring province of Antique. The school visits brought the marine conservation awareness to local youth while the visits to coastal communities provided fisherfolk with essential information about the TRNP Act of 2009 (RA 10067).

Coastal community outreach was focused in areas which have been observed to be sources of illegal fishers apprehended in Tubbataha. While pupils from Grades V to VI and high school students were the primary audience for school visits. Tertiary levels were also included particularly in areas where there are colleges/universities. The methods used were, slide presentations, video showing, photo exhibit, theatrical presentation, environmental games, informal quizzes and just recently, art activities.

About 35,000 audiences were reached from 82 schools visits and 32 coastal barangay visits conducted in Puerto Princesa City and ten municipalities in Palawan, and in one town in Antique from 2008-2012. The younger audience comprised 54.6% of the total audience reached, followed by the youth sharing 35.6%, and fisher folks with 9.8%. The methodology and modules used are found in Appendix 2.

2) Exposure Trips, Briefings and Meetings
The channels that were used for reaching other audiences such as, tourists and the private sectors (or dive operators), donors/legislators, and media were exposure trips to Tubbataha, briefings, and meetings. Activities directed to dive tourism sector like the annual dive operators meeting, on-board pre-departure briefing and divemasters orientation, were regularly done as this are already integrated in the annual work plan for Tubbataha.

The approach for donors and legislators, on the other hand, vary depending on the circumstances. A three-day trip to Tubbataha was proven to be the most effective way of improving their understanding of the field operations and current management challenges.

Exposure trip was also a tool identified for children and the youth but was not realized due to the high risk involve even if funds were available.

3) Photo Exhibits
Experiential learning is said to be one of the effective tools to foster appreciation however in the case of Tubbataha, the high cost and the risks involve in bringing the younger audience prevent the TMO from doing so. In order to bring Tubbataha closer to the heart of the Palaweños, photo exhibits were installed either as part of the public outreach program, or independently in other events held by TMO or by other partners (i.e., World Wetlands Day & 25th anniversary celebration, and other local workshops/conferences and schools events). This activity does not only provide a venue for people to
interact, raise questions and express their views, but it also leave a clearer picture of the subject, like
the Tubbataha Reefs, that words cannot fully express.

4) Dive Operators, Divemaster Orientation and Pre-departure Briefings
The conduct of dive operators meeting is regularly done every year since 2002. Pre-departure briefing
was intensified in 2010 where 88% of all trips to Tubbataha were boarded and it has been consistently
done every summer since then. An orientation for boat crew and divemaster were initiated to improve
the appreciation of the people working for the dive companies operating in Tubbataha and to ensure
that they are knowledgeable of the park rules and regulations. This group of audience was also
encouraged to support park management through the research monitoring forms we provide to all
visitors and divemasters. However a very low turnout was experienced in the previous years, thus
improvements on this initiative were made this year to address this challenge.

Activities such as EE core trainers refresher course, Search for outstanding environmental teacher,
and IEC Campaign launching were not held basically due to the absence of inhouse expertise,
complexity of the mechanics, and mostly, lack fund to carry out these activities. There was an attempt
to hold a paralegal training for fisherfolks from Roxas and Cagayancillo, Palawan when funds were
secured. However, events that were beyond human control, i.e., bad weather, personnel turnover, etc.
made the activity impossible to hold at that time until funds were no longer be available. Other
activity like participation to trade shows to reaching out to the dive sector were partly done but was
only limited to provisions of info materials (i.e., brochures, map, photos, AVPs, etc.)

Strategy: Production and Distribution of Information Materials

1) Prints Media
The Tubbataha notebook and primer containing basic information about Tubbataha and its value,
how it is being managed and who manages it were distributed to schools. The primer and the copies
of the slide and video presentations for school visits were also used by some teachers, who were
secondary audience of the school activities, as reference materials and tools for teaching science and
social studies or HEKASI.
Copies of the Tubbataha Law (RA 10067) were also distributed to coastal communities and in law enforcement offices and LGUs. Brochures, dive maps and tokens (luggage tags) for visitors and dive operators were regularly produced. Other materials like bookmarks, posters, billboard and banners were produced for specific events (i.e., New 7 Wonders campaign, 25th anniversary celebration, etc.)

2) Mass Media
The radio plugs and short video plugs (It’s More Fun in the Philippines) produced in 2008, 2012 and
2013 augmented the public outreach efforts and at somehow made Tubbataha a household word.
Events and incidents like, the New 7 Wonders campaign in 2008, the two groundings and the 25th
anniversary celebration in 2013, put Tubbataha in the headlines in both print and broadcast media.

3) Website
The TRNP website already went three reconstructions since it was developed in 2005 (?) to improve its
content and make it more user-friendly. It served as a cross-cutting tool in delivering messages to all
target audiences and to the general public. In 2008 to 2010, it was observed that the volume of e-mails
related to inquiry on volunteering, research and tourism has increased. This have shown that the
audience of Tubbataha has preferred this channel to get information about the Park.

4) Social Media
The birth of social media has shaped the way people communicate nowadays. It is now a powerful tool in
reaching out audiences with a minimal cost. Though it was not identified in the previous plan, TMO
were able to tapped to this resource and created its fanpage ‘Friends of Tubbataha’ in Facebook, the
leading social networking site, in 2010.
Among the materials that were not produced are: video clips and handouts/fliers on scientific research results translated to local/colloquial language and livelihood manuals for fisherfolks, comics, animation, workbook, and module on marine conservation integrated to CWTS for college students, booklet and coffee table book for the private sector, integrated EE module with supplementary teaching materials and monitoring/assessment tool for educators and teachers, tagline, paid print ads, commissioning celebrity endorser for the media, coffee table book and promotional videos for donors and legislators.

A summary of the information materials produced from 2008 to 2013 is presented in Appendix 3.

EVALUATING IEC PROGRAM: ARE OBJECTIVES BEING ACHIEVED

The evaluation of the previous 3-year IEC plan was supposedly done in 2012. However, the lack of funds and the unavailability of experts to conduct the survey at that time limited the TMO to do the assessment thus the implementation of the same was extended for two more years (2012-2013).

In 2013, the much needed assessment was finally realized when Coastal Conservation and Education Foundation, Inc. (CCEF) was engaged. Only two of the six audiences were covered by the assessment and the results was used to evaluate the current activities, tools and messages for the said audience. The remaining four audiences were evaluated based on the activities conducted and materials produced against the objectives of the Conservation Awareness program:

Promoting Awareness – The IEC assessment conducted by the CCEF revealed that awareness on Tubbataha and its value to fisheries among the youth and the fisherfolks is really high. The survey results said the sources of information were not necessarily the school and coastal barangay outreach conducted by TMO but from television, radio and newspaper for the older audience and internet for the younger audience, to which the TMO has also used to reach out to these audience. There are documented reports however showing high awareness among the fisherfolks on the Tubbataha Law and have further consider fear rather than appreciation as the primary driver for not fishing in Tubbataha. The regular production of information materials for and the direct interactions with tourists and dive operators have provided this group with more access to information and made them more aware of the value of the park and the rules and regulations. Promoting awareness among the donors and legislators was somewhat personal and direct in nature. The continued support generated from most of the partners brought to Tubbataha through exposure trips validates their appreciation of the value of the park.

Generate support and voluntary compliance - The only measurable indicators, so far, in measuring support generated from audience particularly from fisherfolks, tourists and dive operators are the number of illegal activities in Tubbataha and the compliance of the private sectors with the regulations. The drastic drop in the number of illegal incidents was experienced when IEC efforts were intensified in 2009. There were also other evidences of receiving support from fisherfolks, i.e., reports of planned illegal activity, etc. This however cannot be directly attributed to the increased in appreciation to the value of Tubbataha specially among the fisherfolks as this requires a more in depth study.

The activities implemented to increase awareness of the tourists and dive operators has resulted to almost 100% compliance to permitting system, and low incident of tourism related violations in the past five years.

Financial support from donors can be quantified through the total amount the TMO received. For IEC materials alone an estimated of over PhP625,000 from various organizations were received. Consistent support for IEC was also secured for two years (amounting to PhP 3 million) from the PSFI. Non-monetary support also came through technical expertise and supplementary IEC materials (i.e, WWF-information materials, CI-Phil booklets, etc).
CONSIDERATIONS

Given the changes in the way information are being transmitted and on the new channels where people get access to information, and all the varying factors affecting audience knowledge, attitude and practices towards the marine environment, the TMO has to consider several factors in addition to the recommendations made by the CCEF in its report, in formulating its 5-year IEC plan.

Identify specific positive behavior or actions TRNP IEC wants to promote or influence. The previous IEC Plan was clear on who to target and on the messages the targets needs to receive. However, it did not clearly determine the specific actions expected or supports to be generated from each audience using their improved knowledge. What knowledge, attitude and practices of target audience that the TRNP IEC initiatives will try to improve or promote?

Audiences has to be reassessed. Much have changed in the landscape of learning and information access in the past eight years since the TMO conducted an analysis of its target audience for IEC. Re-assessing the current audience againsts the developments in the general conservation programs while considering the improved level of awareness of the audiences would help in determining if TMO should still target the same group for the next five years or new primary audiences has emerged.

IEC vs. Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) – Is TMO prepared to go beyond the IEC and start working for a more enduring impact on its audience? The IEC assessment results showed a high level of awareness among the target audience. However, it is important to note that improved knowledge does not automatically translate to pro-environmental actions and attitudes towards their immediate seas due to other factors that disabled people to do so.

Generally, IEC is defined as:

- a process of working with individuals, communities and societies to develop communication strategies to promote positive behaviors which are appropriate to their settings.

It only refers to communication messages and materials that form part of a BCC intervention, which is defined as:

- a process of working with individuals, communities and societies to develop communication strategies to promote positive behaviors which are appropriate to their settings; AND provide a supportive environment which will enable people to initiate and sustain positive behaviors.²

Achieving an enduring change in the behavior and attitude of the target audience requires a more sustained effort that provides an environment conducive for propagating positive actions. A supportive environment or possible enablers included multi-disciplinary teams, a people-focused approach, tools that facilitate community learning about the links between the personal and ecological, and financial instruments that can complement human resource input to support behaviour change.³

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