

Development and production of two children's educational activity books and a scientific toolkit for the Aldabra Atoll World Heritage Site



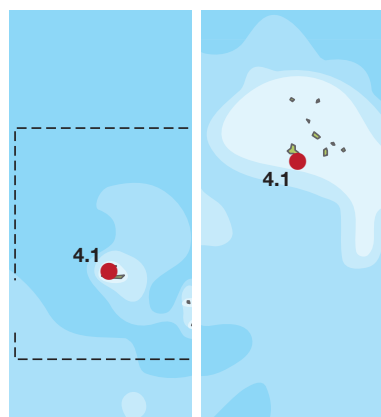
Some of the toolkit materials, Seychelles © SIF

Target beneficiaries

Seychellois students, local communities and foreign visitors.

Outputs

- ▶ Two books were completed and their contents reviewed and tested by students and teachers with encouraging results before a nationwide school launch.
- ▶ A third book was published and put on sale in bookshops to reach a wider audience and raise revenue for conservation and education.
- ▶ The books and other information about Aldabra were put on display at the Vallee de Mai World Heritage Site Visitor Centre on Praslin Island.



LOCATION

Aldabra Atoll and Mahé, Seychelles, with nationwide distribution

PRIORITY POWS

- Civil Society Engagement
- Marine Protected Areas

DURATION

July 2009 to March 2011

MFF GRANT AMOUNT

US\$24,139
(actual expenditure was US\$21,969)

Objectives

This project aimed to create an educational pack containing a scientific toolkit for learners visiting Aldabra Atoll and two educational books on Aldabra, one aimed at upper primary students (P4–P6) and the other at secondary students (S1–S5). The publications were designed to give teachers interesting information for students about Aldabra and the activities of the Seychelles Island Foundation (SIF), the body entrusted with protecting Aldabra, one of two UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the Seychelles.

Background

Although Aldabra is internationally renowned as one of the world's least-disturbed oceanic islands, is designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, and is home to the Seychelles's largest remaining area of mangrove forests, this "living laboratory" is largely unknown to many Seychellois children. The project sought to fill this important knowledge gap by creating materials that will instill pride in Seychellois youth and kindle an interest in and concern for their natural environment.

- ▶ Toolkit activities on Aldabra will begin after the risks from Somali piracy have been addressed and school visits to the atoll resume.

Accomplishments and challenges

The books have been well-received, stimulating interest in Aldabra and coastal conservation among children and adults alike.

The Aldabra Children's Book Group (ACBG), which compiled the books, consists of experienced educators, all of whom have visited Aldabra in a professional capacity. They have described the project as a learning experience that enhanced their teaching skills and encouraged them to adopt more flexible and enjoyable approaches.

The books appeal to both children and adults, and have proved to be attractive tools which children can use to learn together with their parents and family members.

Challenges

The main challenges were logistical, principally the difficulty of attracting and keeping

local designers capable of meeting deadlines. Some challenges were beyond SIF's control, for example piracy, which limited access to the island by boat. The conflicting commitments of ACBG members also slowed implementation.

Contributions to cross-cutting themes

Communications

Communication was central to the project, which produced two full-colour, A4-sized books (with 60 pages for the primary school book and 64 pages for the secondary school book). Both books contain guidelines for teachers and parents. A third full-colour book of 28 pages, incorporating elements from the first two books supplemented with newly adapted activities, was produced to appeal to a broader audience.

The project also published an Aldabra toolkit to enrich school visits to the atoll. This contains learning units that can be photocopied, field observation exercises and games that encourage learning and creativity. Newspaper coverage of the project appeared in *The Nation* newspaper.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Gender equality

The project aimed to educate equally irrespective of gender. The project team was composed entirely of women.

Climate change

Education about climate change issues is built into the educational material, particularly in the research section which illustrates the importance of long-term monitoring projects and Aldabra's status as a global benchmark. Issues such as coral bleaching and sea level rise are also fully addressed in a local and global context.

Lessons learned

It is important to identify consultants who can deliver on time and ensure that their contract is fully understood and respected. Incentives such as bonuses for prompt delivery are helpful but must be documented so that all parties fully understand their obligations and adjust their schedules accordingly. Another lesson is that designing educational materials for children takes considerable time and thought. Project outcomes should not be compromised by a too-ambitious time frame.



Students test the Aldabra toolkit, Aldabra, Seychelles
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"This was a great learning experience for me, despite my many years in the teaching profession. I saw my old-style methods adjusted into a very interesting, interactive and fun style of learning, opening my eyes to more effective education. This led me to design an Aldabra board game with lots of ideas in it and I am so proud of this accomplishment."

— DORA ERNESTA
ACBG'S MOST-EXPERIENCED
EDUCATOR