Empowering All: Disability No Barrier To Nature-Based Solutions And FMNR Actions:

A story of Mr. Ben Ofasiri: A passionate Advocate for Climate Change Adaptation.

This case study examines the mangrove restoration work undertaken by Mr. Ben Ofasiri and his group, with support from World Vision and WWF-Australia through the CRxN initiative. The study identifies key issues, achievements, and lessons learned from the restoration efforts, providing valuable recommendations for stakeholders and partners going forward

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Methodology:

This study employed a qualitative research approach to gather information on the challenges, lessons learned, and impacts of the NbS-FMNR project on the environment and communities. Data collections were conducted in two phases: First, through an *in-depth interview:* Semi-structured interview was conducted with Mr. Ben to gather first-hand information on his experiences and perspectives on the NbS-FMNR project. Mr. Ben was the target sample for this case study, who was selected due to his significant involvement in the NbS-FMNR project. Second, a *desktop review* of existing project reports, literature, and other relevant documents was conducted to supplement the interview data.

The collected data were analyzed and presented in a narrative form, with key findings and lessons learned highlighted in the following sections. Diagrams and infographics were used to visualize the data and facilitate understanding. Direct quotes from Mr. Ben were also used to provide voice to Ben and serve as evidence to substantiate the findings and conclusions made from the data. The quotes were presented in orange and italic text to distinguish them from the researcher's narrative. Additionally, some primary information has been paraphrased to maintain confidentiality and avoid misrepresentation. All data were analyzed and presented in a way that ensures accuracy, reliability, and clarity.

Findings and Recommendations:

1. The government and all local communities are recommended to formally recognize the mangrove ecosystem as valuable and an endangered ecosystem, thereby ensuring an instant comprehensive protection for mangrove forests across the country.

2. It is recommended that the mangrove nursery-transplanting method be utilized in areas with minimal exposure to direct wave action and currents to ensure optimal effectiveness and survival rate. Direct planting and other restoration methods should be considered for regions with a high level of exposure to abiotic factors.

3. When developing regulations to safeguard community-shared resources and livelihood sources, consideration must be given to providing alternatives while protecting the resources and livelihood sources in question.

4. In addition to the numerous benefits mangroves provide as a habitat and ecosystem, the fruits of mangrove trees constitute a significant nutritional component of the local diet. This factor encourages community participation in mangrove restoration efforts. Consequently, it is recommended that the economic potential of products derived from these mangrove fruits be optimized through market-linkage, thereby offering a viable means of generating revenue for local communities.

5. Given the simplicity and practicality of Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), PWD, women, and youth can enhance and exercise their capacity to lead, participate in, and engage with Nature-based Solutions initiatives. This approach also provides these groups with the opportunity to leverage their traditional knowledge in farming, restoration efforts, and food management to combat climate change.

6. FMNR core aspect, which is predominantly pruning of tree stumps, is rarely applied in mangrove forests at Sulagwalu due to high saline, disease and biotic threats that disabled stumps from regenerating.

Mr. Ben Ofasiri, a dedicate advocator for climate change adaptation, is deeply passionate about Nature-Based Solutions (NbS), particularly the Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) approach. Living with a physical disability in the coastal community of Sulagwalu village, Ben has long observed the alarming effects of climate change on his village's coastline.

For years, he has witnessed the erosion of the shoreline, rising sea levels, and the decline of local biodiversity. Troubled by these changes, Ben began to wonder how he and his community could effectively combat these challenges. Fueled by hope and determination, he set out on a mission to explore potential solutions that could restore their environment and improve resilience against climate change.

Ben and his group began their restoration work approximately four years ago with limited resources and without any support from organizations or local government. It was not until 2023 that World Vision stepped in to offer assistance under the NbS-FMNR project. With the support of World Vision, Ben and his peers have had access to numerous trainings in mangrove restoration, conservation and related areas. Additionally, they have received the necessary resources to support and enable their work. As a result, their group has made significant strides, successfully covering a large area with newly planted mangroves.

Given his physical condition, Ben could have easily given up or chosen to prioritize other activities that might provide financial support for himself and his family. However, his true passion lies in enhancing ecosystem resilience and promoting environmental health. Moreover, the introduction of World Vision's support has led to a substantial improvement in the survival rates of these mangroves, a testament to the positive impact of the project. In this case study of Mr. Ben Ofasiri, we will explore how the NbS-FMNR initiative focused on mangrove restoration has impacted both his life and the surrounding environment.

Ben Ofasiri resides with his family in Matakwalao, a small coastal community situated in Sulagwalu village, North Malaita. Ben is a married man with four children (two daughters and two sons). As a primary earner, he supports his family's needs alongside his wife through his profession as a farmer. Much of his time is devoted to his duties at the mangrove site and his food garden.

Ben has emerged as a champion in mangrove restoration work, a field in which he has developed significant expertise. The accompanying photographs, attributed to Allen Kaboa, WVSI Communication Officer, capture Ben at the FMNR mangrove site and alongside his young cousin at the nursery site.

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Landscape

Sulagwalu Community is located on the northeastern coast of Malaita, Solomon Islands. Separated by more than an 80km road from Auki the provincial capital, it lies close to a coastal valley bordered by typical green hills of the region. The community's closeness to both the coast and forested areas provides a suitable environment for both terrestrial and marine biodiversity.

Fig.1.2: An aerial view and map of Sulagwalu community in North Malaita, Solomon Islands.

The terrestrial landscape of Sulagwalu is predominantly characterized by wetlands, shrubs and tropical rainforest, featuring a high diversity of native flora. The forest cover is significant, with approximately more than 70% of the surrounding area maintained as shrubs and forest. This includes valuable species such as hardwoods, coconuts, and a variety of fruit trees, which are vital for local subsistence farming and the community's economy.

In addition to the terrestrial forests, Sulagwalu is also home to mangrove ecosystems along its coastal areas. These mangrove forests play a crucial role in coastal protection, providing habitats for various marine species and acting as a buffer against erosion and storm surges. The health of these mangrove areas is essential for the community, as they support fisheries and contribute to overall coastal resilience.

Sulagwalu experiences a tropical climate, characterized by high humidity and temperatures throughout the year. The region typically has a wet season from November to April, marked by heavy rainfall and occasional tropical storms. The dry season, which lasts from May to October, experiences reduced rainfall and increased sunshine. The climate supports the lush vegetation of both terrestrial and mangrove forests, benefiting local agriculture and providing essential resources for the community.

Fig.1.3: Areas without mangrove and are under restoration. Courtesy of *Allen Kaboa. WVSI Coms officer.*

The health status of mangrove ecosystem at Sulagwalu is increasingly declining as threatened by climate change and human activities. Rising sea levels intensify coastal erosion and inundation, compromising the habitat's integrity. Change in rainfall patterns disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater, leading to stress on mangrove species. Additionally, higher temperatures can increase vulnerability to pests and diseases. Ocean acidification poses risks to marine species that rely on mangroves for breeding and shelter, further endangering local fisheries and food security. Human activities, including deforestation and coastal development, worsen these pressures, amplifying habitat degradation. To preserve these vital ecosystems and the livelihoods they support, urgent conservation measures and sustainable management practices are essential. Under NbS FMNR Project, World Vision has been supporting community engagement in restoration efforts and implementing protective regulations to enhance the resilience of Sulagwalu's terrestrial and especially mangrove forests in the face of Climate Change.

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Challenges and Risks

In the lead-up to Mr. Ben's work in the mangrove ecosystem, he encountered numerous challenges that highlight the countless issues facing these vital resources. The threats to mangroves stem from both natural and human-induced factors, underscoring the extensive difficulties that confront their conservation and sustainable management. We will guide you through some of the concerns expressed by Mr. Ben during his work in the mangrove ecosystem before and after World Vision's involvement.

Limited tangible and technical support.

Prior to World Vision's involvement, Ben and his young relatives took the initiative to restore mangrove near and along their village's coastal area. Unaware of the challenges that awaited them, they proceeded with their plan with enthusiasm and determination. Three months into the plan, Ben and his group began to experience and realized the challenges associated with such work.

Fig1.4 Sulagwalu youths transporting mangrove seedlings to the site for transplanting using one of the wheelbarrows provided by World Vision Solomon Islands through NbS-FMNR project. *Courtesy of Barnabas Koroa WVSI staff*

"When we embarked on this initiative, our primary focus was solely on restoring the mangrove ecosystem. However, we had not anticipated the multitude of challenges we would encounter along the way. While we lacked a proper restoration model to guide us, our greatest obstacle lay in the absence of protective regulations governing our mangrove sites. Individuals from neighboring villages could easily trespass and chop trees without any hesitation. Moreover, we faced significant limitations in resources, lacking essential tools such as nails and hammers for constructing nursery boxes, as well as wheelbarrows for transporting mangrove seedlings to transplant sites. Fortunately, today we have access to the necessary tools and are supported by legal protections for these vital areas, thanks to the efforts of World Vision and WWF-Australia". Ben Ofasiri.

Ben, on the other hand, did not receive any formal training in mangrove restoration initially, which resulted in him and his group missing out on significant insights and technical skills related to restoration techniques. They lacked a deep understanding of the growth behaviors of various mangrove species or the science behind mangrove. Ben relies on his traditional knowledge and comprehension of the coastal context of Sulagwalu, which is of great significance; however, he acknowledges the need for support to acquire further knowledge about mangrove restoration and the ecosystem as a whole. He noted that the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) project implemented by World Vision has made a significant difference in their efforts towards mangrove restoration. For instance, he emphasized that they

observed young mangrove leaves and stems being consumed by snails and insects, which adversely affected their growth and survivability. However, after receiving training and technical support under the NbS-FMNR project, they implemented physical monitoring techniques regularly to enhance the care of young mangroves. This practice is primarily conducted at night to remove snails and small hermit-like crabs, utilizing torchlights provided under the NbS-FMNR project.

> *"I recall back then (2022), when you and your team came to introduce the project to us; I realized that mangrove restoration is part of the Nature-based Solutions approach to combat climate change. I perceived the NbS-FMNR project as an astonishing opportunity for us to access proper training and gain valuable insights into Nature-based Solutions, particularly in the realm of ecosystem restoration or 'waka lo eria blo manguru.'"*

Tension over land and mangrove resources.

Ben and his group have also encountered another significant challenge stemming from neighboring villages, where local residents have asserted their perceived entitlement to access resources, including the land where their four mangrove sites are situated. According to Ben, individuals from nearby villages frequently trespass on his area, engaging in unauthorized activities, particularly tree cutting and mangrove seed collection, without any apparent consequences. Moreover, they claim to have inherent rights to Ben's tribal land and resources, despite the fact that Ben's tribe has been officially registered as the rightful owners.

The unauthorized activities perpetrated by these intruders constitute a substantial risk to both the mangrove ecosystem and Ben's group, particularly if the situation were to escalate. Furthermore, Ben's group is also concerned that reporting the matter to the authorities might exacerbate the issue, given that these trespassers appear to maintain connections within the Sulagwalu tribe. However, the introduction of FMNR bylaws to govern such unlawful activities has provided Ben with a crucial safety net, allowing him and his group to expand their work and maximize restoration efforts in the area.

Coastal Development.

The ongoing development and construction of a growth center near the Sulagwalu mangrove area have already led to a reduction in mangrove cover and density at one end of the forest. Heavy machinery was deployed to clear the site, resulting in significant damage to the mangroves and a substantial decline in biodiversity. Such development not only has detrimental effects on the existing ecosystems, but it also poses a risk to Ben's future work.

> *"The boundaries of the area designated for this development are clearly defined. However, our observations indicate that the operation of machinery during the site clearance phase was both reckless and illegal. The machines encroached beyond the established boundaries, causing further damage to our mangroves. My concern is that, in the future, they may initiate additional site clearance, which could jeopardize our newly restored mangroves. The positive development is that we now have formal regulations in place that could facilitate a mutual understanding and encourage respect for each other's domains moving forward".*

Fig 2.1: Shrubs covering an area where mass clearance of mangroves occurred in the name of development. *Courtesy of Allen Kaboa WVSI Coms Officer.*

According to Ben's statement, it is evident that the implementation of FMNR bylaws has instilled in them the confidence to engage with developers and discuss any situations that may arise in the future. This is a challenge they have found difficult to handle before, particularly when the government is involved as an opposing party.

Abiotic factors

Environmental physical threats also present significant risks and challenges for mangrove restoration efforts in Sulagwalu. Excessive saltwater intrusion has resulted in an imbalance in the salt-freshwater gradient, causing stress in juvenile mangroves and adversely affecting their health. Species such as *Bruguiera gymnorrhiza*, which yields edible fruits; tend to thrive in wetlands or drier areas. However, with the rise in salinity levels and temperature in the region, wilting of mangrove leaves has been observed as well as a decline in the juvenile fish population.

Wave action is not a major challenge in the area; however, king tides have occasionally occurred, bringing substantial amounts of rubbish and logs that pose risks to juvenile mangroves. According to Mr. Ben Ofasiri, during king tides, additional clean-up efforts are required at the site, necessitating the removal of debris from young mangroves within the four sites. This increased workload results in heightened human movements within the sites, which also poses further risks to the newly restored mangroves. Nevertheless, the presence of the NbS-FMNR project at Sulagwalu community means there is a response plan in place. This includes the introduction of complementary Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to mitigate these risks while enhancing the growth rate and survivability of the mangroves. This plan will be implemented and overseen by an Environmental Specialist (Engineer) and will receive support from the World Vision team and WWF-A.

Replacing other tree species with mangrove.

From an ecological perspective, this approach may pose significant risks, potentially resulting in maladaptation and other challenges. At one site, Ben and his team have cleared naturally grown trees in order to plant mangroves as replacements. Ben expressed their belief that clearing the area beforehand would allow adequate sunlight for the newly planted mangroves to thrive. However, we would like to discourage this method and advice against further clearing of existing trees.

Fig. 2.2: One of the sites where naturally grown trees were cleared and replaced with mangrove. *Courtesy of Barnabas Koroa, WVSI staff.*

Surprisingly, in response to our concerns, Ben's team asserted their intention to adopt a proactive strategy, predicting a future increase in salinity levels within the wetland that could jeopardize the existing trees. They argue that replacing these trees with salt-tolerant species, such as mangroves, would mitigate the effects of saltwater intrusion and help maintain the area's vegetation. However, the WV team is continuing discussions with Ben and his group to address this matter before further issues or challenges arise.

Work and Community engagement

Ben and his team are motivated by the support from World Vision through the NbS-FMNR project; consequently, they are leveraging this new knowledge, methods, and practices while incorporating their traditional knowledge to improve and expand their efforts. Ben's group primarily focuses on mangrove restoration and has adopted components of the

FMNR management framework to protect and allow for fast growth of mangroves. They are responsible for the coastal restoration of Sulagwalu, while the remainder of the community and local leaders oversee terrestrial sites.

Ben manages four distinct sites along the coast and near wetlands, encompassing approximately two hectares that are currently being restored. Each week, Mr. Ben and his team take turns conducting mangrove transplanting on-site, monitoring potential threats both day and night. They have implemented two restoration methods: direct planting and nursery transplanting. Additionally, they are collaborating closely with World Vision Solomon Islands to test pruning techniques on mangroves. In a month, his team is capable of planting approximately fifty mangroves, with almost rarely any instances of failure or mortality among the newly planted mangroves.

Despite limited participation from other community members in mangrove restoration activities (which is one of the initial challenges); Ben remains dedicated to his work. When asked about his motivations, Mr. Ben expressed that they have directly experienced the impacts of climate change and have been made aware of how climate change could exacerbate future events. This awareness drives their commitment to engage in restoration efforts.

> *"I have learned from the awareness and training programs delivered under the NbS-FMNR project that the most severe consequences of climate change are yet to come if we do not take proactive measures for mitigation and adaptation. This program has further motivated me, as I recognize that our actions and efforts today will, in some way, support us in the future."*

In collaboration with World Vision, Ben and his group have formulated a strategic objective to extend the existing sites and optimize restoration initiatives. The overarching aim is to achieve connectivity among all four sites by the end of 2025. This effort will serve to not only expand the spatial footprint of their restoration efforts but also elevate community engagement and participation. Consequently, this enhanced approach is poised to create opportunities for the Sulagwalu community to restore and revitalize ecosystem services within the region. This, in turn, may give rise to newfound livelihood opportunities, which are likely to be supported by the community's established leadership and well-developed structures.

Impacts and Achievements

Project impacts and Ben's achievements.

The introduction of the Nature-based Solutions through Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (NbS-FMNR) project has yielded positive outcomes for Ben in terms of capacity building and inclusion in decision-making bodies. Initially, Ben encountered numerous challenges in his work, as discussed in the "Challenges and Risks" section. However, since his involvement in the NbS-FMNR project, he has significantly enhanced his knowledge of mangrove restoration and his ability to lead and make informed decisions. Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) is one of the project's primary focus areas, providing a platform for marginalized groups to learn, exercise their stewardship and leadership skills, and demonstrate to other communities that women, youth, and people with disabilities can be effective leaders.

Ben has been actively engaged in the program delivery of the NbS-FMNR alongside the project team and other FMNR community champions. He has participated in various training sessions focused on mangrove and forest restoration, which included components on stewardship and leadership. As a result, he has acquired valuable knowledge and skills across various capacities.

> *"Since I began my involvement in the project, I have learned a great deal and gained the capacity to lead and develop plans to address our societal issues. I am grateful to World Vision for this opportunity. This project has not only supported us through capacity building but has also provided tangible resources to facilitate our work."*

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Equipped with the significant skills and knowledge acquired from the NbS-FMNR training and awareness programs, Ben successfully applied these lessons to enhance his work on mangrove restoration. Since the project's introduction to Ben and his group, no deaths have been reported among the newly planted mangroves, and there has been a substantial expansion of restoration sites. Furthermore, activities such as the illegal cutting of trees by intruders from neighboring communities have ceased entirely. Additionally, Ben's group has recently halted the removal of naturally growing trees to facilitate mangrove planting.

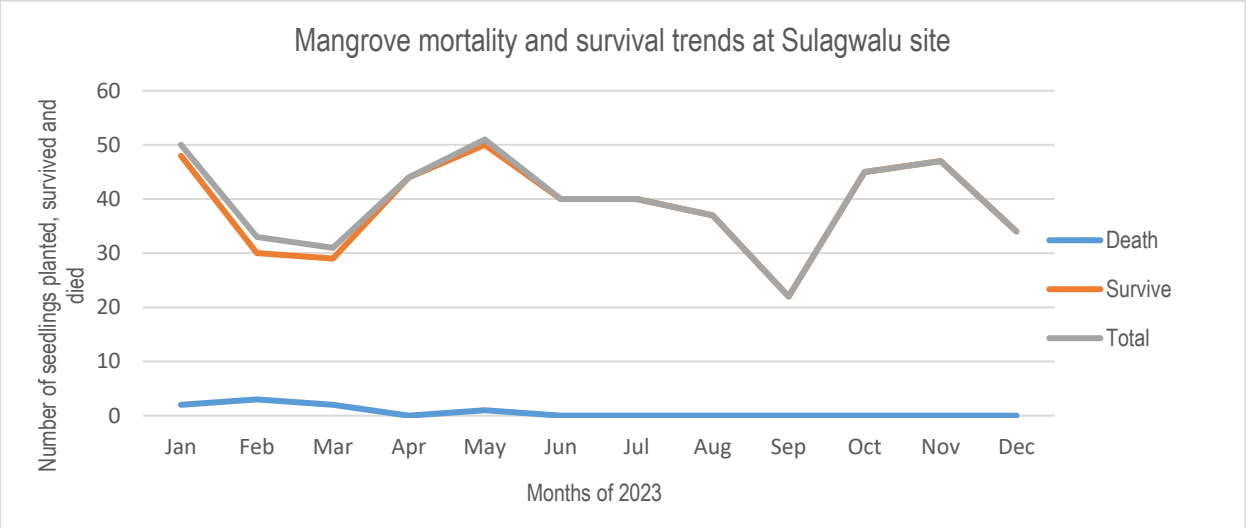

Figure 2.3: Line graph illustrating a decrease in the mortality rate and an increase in the survival rate of juvenile mangroves planted in Sulagwalu after project intervention.

The mortality rate of mangroves prior to June 2023 was notably higher than during the post-FMNR intervention period (after June 2023). This trend provides clear evidence of the positive impacts of the NbS-FMNR project on Ben's efforts, particularly following the series of training sessions and capacity-building programs he participated in since June 2023. For illustration, with reference to Figure 2.3, a trend is observed where the gap between the Survival rate and the Total narrows towards the right, indicating a significant decrease in the death rate of mangroves. This suggests a positive shift in the overall health and resilience of juvenile mangroves. Additionally, the restoration method employed by Ben and his team, specifically nursery transplanting, has demonstrated efficacy due to the site's relative protection from direct wave action and strong currents.

The implementation of regular monitoring as part of the project has further optimized care for juvenile mangroves, thereby enhancing their resilience to environmental threats and risks. Consequently, this has resulted in a significant increase in the survival rate of newly planted mangroves as shown in the chat above.

Environmental benefits

Nature-based Solutions initiatives, such as FMNR mangrove restoration efforts, have been demonstrated to be effective in restoring biodiversity by enhancing species richness & distributions, nutrient availability, and habitat conditions. These initiatives contribute to the restoration and improvement of ecosystem health, thereby revitalizing ecosystem services (Husain, et al., 2024). In Sulagwalu, Ben reported an observed increase in the mud crab population in the area. Additionally, his group noted regular mass movements of fish within the mangrove habitat. Such enhancement of these environmental benefits is attributed to the availability of nutrients (prey), habitats, and substrates that attract larger species or predators to the site.

Below is a simplified diagram illustrating species population and richness at the site before and after the restoration efforts. The data collected may not accurately represent the actual trends in species richness within the site due to the absence of comprehensive baseline data gathered prior to the intervention. However, comparative data for the pre-

intervention phase were obtained through observations of the presence of different species recorded per square meter. The same methodology was employed to collect data on other species.

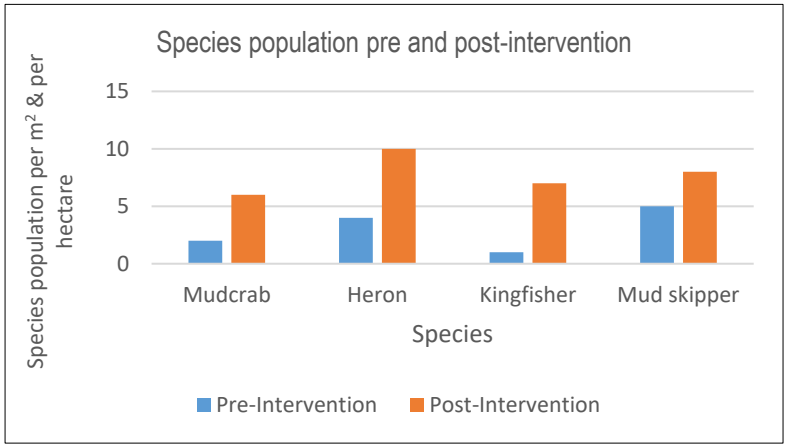

Fig. 2.4: bar graph depicting the changes in species count and population observed per m² (mud crab & skippers) and per hectare (Heron & KF) after NbS initiative.

The positive changes observed in the populations of each species are correlated with the timing of the restoration efforts and project interventions. Furthermore, species richness at this site can be inferred from the population trends, given that the presence of these organisms may lead to an increase in the numbers of species that prey upon them due to the enhanced availability of food (Loch, Walters, & Cook, 2020). For example, an increase in the population of mudskippers could attract more birds and fish of different species that prey on them. This explanation is grounded in the foundational principles of the local food web. Similarly, the enhancement of mangrove cover and density, supported by newly restored mangroves, has resulted in the availability of suitable habitats where numerous fish, invertebrates, and birds can seek shelter from predators and complete various stages of their life cycles (W, Lesser, Litvin, & Nelson, 2020). These ecological relationships have played a significant role in revitalizing biodiversity at Sulagwalu by establishing a link between top predators and primary producers, such as mangroves.

Additional factors may also contribute to the facilitation of biodiversity and ecosystem enhancement at the Sulagwalu mangrove site; however, these would necessitate further investigation through empirical studies or comprehensive desk-based reviews of existing research literature. Alternatively, more targeted research is required to fully explain the complex relationships involved and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the ecological dynamics at play. Consequently, this passage focuses only on the scientific discussion surrounding the principles of food webs and related ecological processes.

Support needed

During a consultation with Ben and his team to discuss the nature of support required to enhance their work, a notable trend emerged, highlighting a lack of tangible support and a need for more straightforward, yet effective measures to maintain motivation and foster continued productivity within the team.

Tangible support

With regard to the technical and capacity-building support provided to Ben under the NbS-FMNR project, it can be concluded that Ben and his team are well-equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge to implement restoration initiatives at any time and location, particularly in conjunction with their traditional knowledge.

Nevertheless, an enabling environment is essential, and it has been noted that there is a critical need for resources and tools to execute their plans effectively. The entire process of mangrove restoration requires different tools and resources at various stages for successful completion. At their current level, they are unable to afford the necessary tools, despite some availability of local materials for improvisation. While the project has already provided them with certain tools and resources, there remains an urgent need for additional materials, such as green shade nets and shovels, to further enable and enhance their efforts.

Incentives and transitional plan

This represents a critical form of support needed by Ben and his community. The primary concern pertains to the post-project period, during which the responsibility for addressing issues and challenges will fall entirely on Ben and his team. Furthermore, any unforeseen circumstances or outcomes may pose significant difficulties for them to manage at the community level.

In light of these concerns, the project team is contemplating providing assistance to Ben and his team in developing a standardized transitional plan for Sulagwalu, specifically tailored to their needs. This plan will incorporate incentives through livelihood opportunities related to the mangrove ecosystem that will sustain community engagement in Nature-based Solutions. Additionally, it will aim to connect the community with appropriate partners and stakeholders who can subsequently assume these opportunities while maintaining a strong partnership with Ben and his community. WVSI could remain in the plan as one of the strong supporter of Ben and his community.

Lessons learned

While supporting Ben and his team in advancing their restoration efforts, we have encountered various challenges and identified gaps that we perceive as lessons to build upon for future improvement. Below, we discuss several key lessons learned from our implementation and collaboration with Ben and his group; additional findings are outline on page 2 of this document.

Community Expectations

Engagement with community members throughout this project has allowed our team to better understand their expectations regarding initiatives of this nature. The quality of our relationship with the community largely depends on our strategies for managing their expectations, addressing disputes, and providing clear guidance on achieving project goals. It is important to recognize that the community's perspective may differ from our own regarding the challenges and opportunities associated with our work. Providing a well-reasoned explanation when responding negatively to their requests especially those driven by expectations can be more valuable than agreeing to demands that may inadvertently heighten their expectations.

Community Engagement

The nature of projects that provide intangible support to communities may not adequately engage a significant number of individuals in Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) initiatives. Community members often expect projects to provide immediate and tangible solutions to their issues. To address this perception, it is essential to adopt an approach that enhances community structures and governance. Such improvements can help elevate community visions and plans, thereby fostering a mindset that recognizes effective pathways for tackling local challenges hence, benefit communities in the end.

Nature-Based Solutions and People with Disabilities (PWD)

Engaging in NbS and Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) initiatives has created opportunities for individuals with disabilities (PWD) and other marginalized groups, enabling them to improve their capacities and achieve new levels of personal development. Ben has reported that the expertise he has gained through NbS and FMNR initiatives has earned him recognition from other communities as an expert in mangrove restoration, elevating his status as a local hero committed to rescuing declining mangrove forests. Furthermore, Ben's involvement in these initiatives has placed him on the global stage, attracting visitors both locally and internationally.

"I have been invited to conduct a mangrove planting demonstration and speak at the Loina community near Sulagwalu. I now possess the confidence and skills to assist other vulnerable communities in engaging with Nature-based Solutions, thanks to the WVSI project team. This is a proud moment for me, especially as a person living with a disability." Ben Ofasiri

Monitoring plan.

Initiatives such as Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) and Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR), which empower communities to take the lead in field-based work, should also be equipped with the capacity to conduct monitoring using simple, participatory monitoring techniques and tools. This approach will enable communities to optimize their data collection and impact observation skills in the field, thereby facilitating the identification and recognition of critical issues that may jeopardize their mangrove restoration efforts. Furthermore, this methodology will allow for the establishment of baseline data, which can be utilized for future surveys and projects, providing a foundation for longitudinal assessment and informed decision-making.

Conclusive Remarks

Ben and his team have accomplished an impressive task in restoring mangroves along the Sulagwalu coastline. Concurrently, World Vision, in partnership with WWF-A, has provided substantial support that has facilitated timely improvements and the expansion of restoration efforts. Since the project's inception, Ben and his team have successfully progressed in their work, covering extensive areas of mangrove, and they recognize and appreciate the significant positive changes brought about by the project.

Despite the numerous challenges encountered throughout this restoration journey, the Nature-Based Solutions (NbS) and Farmer-Managed Natural Regeneration (FMNR) team at World Vision Solomon Islands (WVSI) remains confident that Ben and his team will achieve their ultimate goal and continue to inspire neighboring villages to engage in Nature-Based Solutions initiatives. Moreover, our experience in piloting this project, particularly with the FMNR technique, has proven to be invaluable, providing important lessons and insights that are essential for future initiatives in the realm of Nature-Based Solutions and FMNR. With that, we wish to once again express our sincere gratitude to DFAT, WWF-A, World Vision Australia and World Vision Solomon Islands, and our local implementing partners for their steadfast support throughout the project.

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