

HELEN REEF CONSERVATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECT  
P.O. Box 1017 Koror Palau PW, 96940

PROPOSED EDUCATION AND AWARENESS PROGRAM

THIS YEAR'S PROJECT THEME: Fishing Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.

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PROGRAM SUMMARY:

The goal of the program is to create an awareness program associated with the Helen Reef Project that involves Hatohobei youth and the use of education technologies to better understand their past, present and future cultures and their relationships to the natural environment. More specially, this program, is designed to help young people understand the lifestyle of our ancestors, the way we live today, why and how we have to protect and wisely manage our marine environment.

THE PRESENT SITUATION:

1) There is educational technology in Palau, but limited access to youths - Few young people in the community have had a hands on experience using computers, CD-ROMs and digital video cameras. In the past decade, the Ministry of Education introduced these technologies to the public schools, but not all the schools have their own units to use regularly. Furthermore, Hatohobei's remoteness presents a problem of access to these technologies. Even the students on the mainland rarely get a chance of using these technologies because there are too many students and few technologies to accommodate everyone. We all know that in today's world, with out technology, we will be lost in understanding a significant part of the modern world, which is why it is imperative that we start to educate our children the use of these sophisticated technologies.

2) Cultural traditions may soon be lost- Many of the people who hold on the knowledge related to the marine environment including how to make fishing equipments and the different methods of fishing are in their 60's and 70's. The knowledge is still there, but there have been only few attempt to revive it or document it, and if so it has been done mostly by outsiders. The elderly who are important resources and holders of ancient time-honored knowledge are disappearing one by one, and with them goes irreplaceable information and way of life that helps us define who we are.

3) Youth without direction - There are lack of training programs that enable our young people to learn useful skills and become productive citizens. The school system, which has adopted an American style curriculum, emphasizes academic training and there are few opportunities for Tobian youth to create something with their own hands, and feel the satisfaction of creating something aesthetically pleasing, and learn about their own culture.

THE NEED FOR A CHANGE:

These conditions above establish the rational for a proactive program to address these needs and challenges. Through this program, students will have the opportunity to have a hands on learning experience on the use technology (such as computers and digital video cameras) to role play and capture the old ways of our ancestors and compare it with our ways today. Students will also learn to do basic script writing and video production. Students will have the opportunity to conduct interviews with elders in the community and analyze information collected. Students will also be able to make and document traditional arts and crafts to help carry on and revive the production of traditional materials that is no longer being regularly produced at the present time. Finally, the program will help develop the young people's skills and confidence in public speaking.