Case Study – Environmental Education
Rodrigues, Mauritius

A marine environmental education programme has been underway on Rodrigues since 1999, developed by the Shoals Rodrigues Association, a programme providing technical support on marine conservation, including the establishment of MPAs. Funding comes from several commercial sponsors and donors (including the SEA Trust), and from sales of a board game (Coralation) and a video (The Reef Beneath) produced through the programme.

Club Mer is aimed at students aged 14-21 years and has many members. Two previous members are now the education officers and organise the activities, visiting secondary schools and encouraging membership. The main initiative is a 20-module course on coral reefs, with subjects ranging from coastal dangers to oceanography and coral reef fish. Teacher notes, power point presentations, and demonstration and activity guidelines for the modules are available. There are also courses on swimming, snorkelling and diving. The 'Lagoon Snorkeller' and the more advanced 'Reef Snorkeller' are 10-module courses, led by an instructor, that cover techniques and theory about equipment, safety procedure, ecology and conservation and, in the more advanced case, basic survey techniques. Student manuals are available for these. Students can also work towards other certificates such as 'Fish Watcher', 'Beach Patrol' and 'Oceanographer'.

Primary school children are targeted through programmes in their own classrooms. Workshops have been held to show teachers how marine education can be incorporated into the curriculum. Each primary school has been given a 'treasure chest' of resources such as posters, modelling clay, paints and games and a 120-page teacher pack (Discovering the Ocean World) containing lesson plans, curriculum objectives and activities.

Students are encouraged to come to the Shoals Rodrigues Centre at other times to read books, watch educational videos and undertake their own projects. There have been a variety of special events such as Open Days for families and other Rodriguans, picnic outings, beach clean ups and carnivals. Rodrigues is at an early stage in developing MPAs, and the strong basis of understanding that the education programme will engender in local people, passing from students into the communities, will help generate support for MPAs. Individual MPAs in other countries are unlikely to be able to develop such a comprehensive programme, but many of the ideas could be adapted.

www.shoalsrodrigues.org

Source:; IUCN 2004. *Managing Marine Protected Areas: A Toolkit for the Western Indian Ocean.* IUCN Eastern African Regional Programme, Nairobi, Kenya. 172p.