



CAQALAI, FIJI
MONTHLY ACHIEVEMENT REPORT
OCTOBER 2016

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OBJECTIVES

Our GVI Fiji Caqalai Staff and Volunteers are extremely excited to be venturing in the introduction, facilitation and maintenance of seaweed farming as an alternative source of income generation for families in the developing coastal communities of Moturiki, Fiji. Moturiki is the neighbouring Island to our Marine Conservation base on Caqalai. It is a project we had initially commenced prior to Cyclone Winston however this drew our focus on assisting with RWH and WASH. We aim to introduce methods of alternative livelihood to generate income for local communities.

SUMMARY

Farming of *Kappaphycus alvarezii*, a type of *Eucheuma* seaweed in small locally managed farms in coastal communities throughout Fiji is a well-recognised method of providing an alternative source of income for villagers who traditionally rely on over-exploited reef fisheries for income and protein.

The Department of Fisheries has been operating a successful scheme where they provide the seedlings to the villages, which are farmed, and then they buy-back the un-processed product after it's been harvested and dried. This product is then internationally sold to be purified and used in commercial manufacturing as a thickener and stabiliser. Following a trial farm which was set-up on the house reef of Caqalai, in order to research effective methodologies and effects of seaweed farming on the surrounding fish and benthic life; GVI has been starting to work with a village on Moturiki in setting up their seaweed farm again after the first attempt was destroyed by cyclone Winston. The first session involved an exchange of ideas and expertise with the community and the volunteers helped to tie the seaweed seedlings onto raffia lines which are then floated in front of the village ready for harvest. These lines will then be re-visited every two weeks by GVI to monitor the farm and ensure the best gains for the villagers.



REPORT

With overfishing being listed as the greatest anthropogenic threat to coral reefs in Fiji, the need for alternatives for villagers who rely on artisanal and commercial fishing as a source of cash and protein has never been greater. In keeping with our Caqalai long term objectives mentioned above and following a pilot farm tested on base, GVI is actively involved in facilitating seaweed farming on Moturiki.

As part of GVI's objectives to implement tried and tested alternative income projects in Moturiki, a pilot seaweed farm was set up on the house reef around Caqalai in 2015. This was ensure we could research best-practice methods for harvest, trial ideal locations and conditions, and monitor the effects of the seaweed farm on the surrounding fish and benthic life. Following this pilot, two small scale farms were also set up in two villages on Moturiki but it is unsure whether they had started to receive income from them. Unfortunately in February 2016 the largest cyclone ever recorded in the southern hemisphere tore through Fiji, Cyclone Winston, this completely destroyed both the trial farm on Caqalai and others in the villages.

The months immediately after the cyclone the focus of the villages was on getting the basic infrastructure back up and running and rebuilding key community facilities. However during our project work in the villages it was made clear that there is a keen interest in starting the seaweed farms again as there is a definite need for sustainable source of supplementary cash. GVI Caqalai sent some of our volunteers with staff experienced in seaweed farming to Daku, where the village had procured some seedlings through the Moturiki seaweed representative. This is of particular interest to the villagers as post-Winston WCS, another local marine research NGO, has reported a lack of protein in the villagers from fishing which could lead to the opening of already-established no-take zones.



ABOUT GVI

We're a family-run organisation with an amazing culture and an awesome team of people across the world who are passionate experts in their chosen field and will make your experience a truly unforgettable one (in a good way).

Our award-winning projects receive over 2000 participants every year, and we're proud to say that the vast majority of them describe their experience with us as 'life changing'. Our approval rate from over 20 000 participants since 1997 is over 95%.

A key component of the success of our community development and conservation projects is the participants who join our programs. Opportunities include high impact volunteering from one week and up, internships for those looking for career development opportunities, Challenges that allow a one week adventure all for a good cause and a range of programs for school groups and younger volunteers.

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