

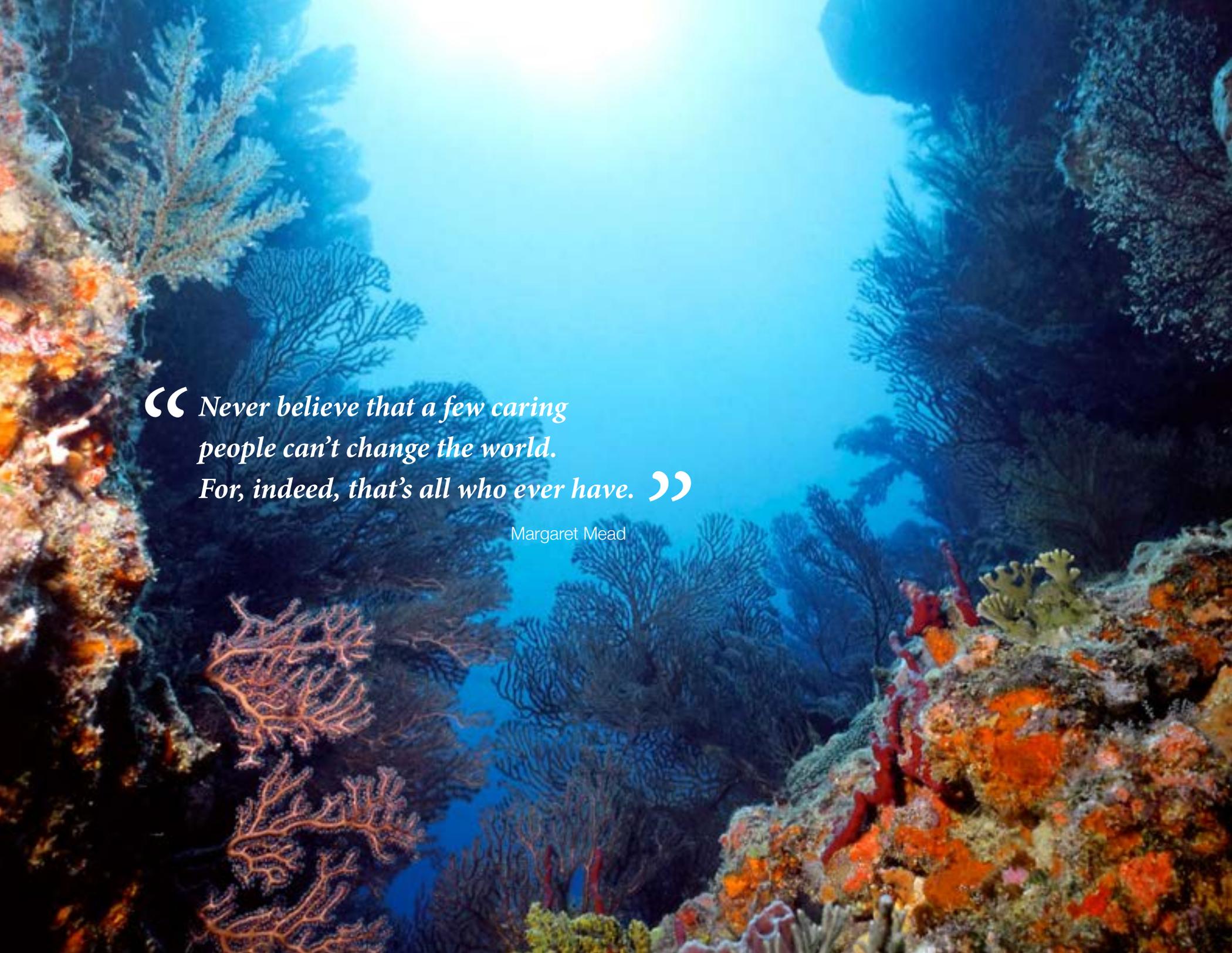


WORLD
CORALS



CORAL REEF
ALLIANCE

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

A vibrant underwater scene featuring a diverse coral reef. The water is a clear, deep blue, and the sunlight filters down from the top, creating a bright, ethereal atmosphere. The reef is composed of various types of coral, including branching corals in shades of orange, red, and brown, and more complex, multi-colored structures in the foreground. The overall composition is rich and detailed, showcasing the beauty and complexity of marine life.

*“ Never believe that a few caring
people can’t change the world.
For, indeed, that’s all who ever have. ”*

Margaret Mead



Over the past year, we have accomplished a great deal in our efforts to save coral reefs and we are excited to share these successes in our 2015 Annual Report. We also want to share our vision for the future of coral reefs and how this inspires our ongoing work.

Many of the benefits from our reefs depend on living corals. Corals are the architects of the reef, and build the structures that provide nurseries and shelter for millions of sea animals. They provide people with livelihoods from fisheries and tourism, storm protection and sources for new medicines. These benefits are at risk as coral reefs decline around the world, but together, we can save them.

Corals are struggling due to local pressures and global climate change; however, we have identified a solution that will help corals build reefs and maintain the needed benefits for people and wildlife. *The answer is in the corals themselves.*

Corals are incredibly diverse, with many species and varieties spread across the reefs. Corals have adapted for hundreds of millions of years, and if allowed, will continue to do so. For example, some corals can live in warmer water; others can thrive in polluted oceans. Special corals like these, and their offspring, may be best suited for the reefs of the future.

Our aim is to ensure that enough of these corals survive on enough healthy coral reefs so they can repopulate other nearby reef sites. In this way, corals—and everything that depends on them—*will have an opportunity to adapt to a changing environment.*

In practice, this means continuing to focus on reducing local threats, so that corals will have a greater chance to grow, reproduce and spread to new reefs. We will continue to work with local partners to reduce threats, help communities benefit from conservation and improve reef management. But these efforts will be most effective if we do them within a network of carefully chosen places that are intimately connected to each other—an *Adaptive Reefscape*.

As we move into 2016, our work will focus on Adaptive Reefscape. We have already started on the Mesoamerican Reef, which spans four countries: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. With our partners, we will advance our efforts so that the Mesoamerican Reef has enough healthy, locally managed areas and reefs throughout the region that can adapt and thrive. We will then take this Adaptive Reefscape blueprint to coral reef regions around the world.

We are leading CORAL into a new era of science-based, innovative conservation work that we have designed to enable reefs to thrive not just today, but for generations to come.

Now is the time. Join Us!



Dr. Michael Webster



Jim Tolonen

Coral reefs are among the most diverse ecosystems in the world and are home to 25 percent of all forms of ocean life. In fact, it's estimated that 2 million species are found in, on and around coral reefs.

500 Million People Worldwide Rely on Coral Reefs for Food and Income

Coral Reefs Provide the Basis for an Estimated \$400 Billion a Year in the Global Fishing and Tourism Industry

Corals are the heart of the reef ecosystem and local and global threats are taking a toll on their ability to thrive and survive.

Sea temperatures are rising, and ocean waters are becoming more acidic—*when these global threats combine with local threats, it leaves corals extremely vulnerable.*

Scientists Say that Without Intervention, Nearly All Reefs will be Threatened by 2050

There is hope for coral reefs and each and every year, the Coral Reef Alliance is making a difference.



For more than 20 years, the Coral Reef Alliance has worked to unite communities to save coral reefs. For reefs to survive global change, we must address local threats by building management systems that effectively protect coral reefs. *We do this by:*

- Working with communities to address local threats such as poor water quality and overfishing
- Developing conservation financing plans that allow communities to autonomously manage their marine resources and protect coral reefs
- Connecting local communities to science and research that drives more informed management decisions
- Building local capacity and partnerships to ensure communities benefit socially, culturally and economically from conservation efforts
- Engaging with policymakers and government officials to advocate on behalf of local conservation efforts that protect coral reefs

In 2015, we demonstrated that local conservation efforts can improve the health of coral reefs. Our successes in Fiji, Indonesia, Hawai'i and Honduras add up to something greater—a *healthy future for coral reefs and the communities that depend on them around the globe.*

Together, we can change the trajectory for coral reefs.



Clean Water for Reefs

Our Clean Water for Reefs Initiative is a global effort that unites local communities around the world. Together, we develop solutions that address water pollution from land-based sources that is killing our reefs—from sewage pollution to contaminated runoff and sedimentation.

In 2015, CORAL achieved positive, long-term outcomes for coral reefs and communities.

- **In West End Roatan, Honduras**, we helped connect 128 homes and businesses (82 percent of the community) to a sewage treatment plant. This prevents 11.3 million gallons of untreated sewage from entering the ocean each year.
- **In West Maui, Hawai'i**, we held our first Reef-Friendly Shoreline Innovations course for the hotel industry—every participant is actively implementing reef-friendly landscaping and sustainability projects to prevent stormwater runoff from reaching the ocean. The projects and improved management practices cover more than 112 acres of sensitive West Maui shoreline property.
- **In Puakō, Hawai'i**, we worked with the Puakō community to reach a major milestone in our efforts to eliminate household sewage contamination with the release of a comprehensive Preliminary Engineering Report that supports the Clean Water for Reefs Puakō project. The report provides a thorough analysis of three potential wastewater treatment solutions for the Puakō community and a formal recommendation on the best option—an onsite treatment facility.



“Thanks for explaining to me about the herbivores. I’m going to throw them back now.”

West Maui fisherman

Sustainable Fishing

Many coral reefs support livelihoods in small villages and communities and provide an important source of food and income; however, overfishing can disrupt the ecological balance on coral reefs. For example, when too many herbivorous fish are taken from a reef, seaweeds can overgrow reef-building corals.

More than 55 percent of the world’s reefs are threatened by overfishing and destructive fishing.

Well-managed marine protected areas are a valuable tool for combating overfishing.

Here’s a glimpse into how we helped protect reef fish in 2015:

- **In Fiji**, the Kubulau Resource Management Committee apprehended five illegal poachers in the Namena Marine Reserve in December alone—a result of an enforcement protocol that we helped them create and implement.
- **In Indonesia**, we worked with six villages in Northern Bali to develop community-based management plans that outline strategies to promote sustainable tourism and other marine livelihoods across a network of marine protected areas.
- **In Maui, Hawai’i**, we educated 138 fishermen on the importance of protecting herbivores in West Maui’s Kahekili Herbivore Fisheries Management Area (KHFMA). The fishermen responded positively. A recent report from the Division of Aquatic Resources shows that the KHFMA is working: parrotfish biomass has increased by 138 percent; certain seaweeds, which are bad for corals, have declined; and beneficial crustose coralline algae have increased.



Reefs Tomorrow Initiative

Around the world, coral reefs face many threats, including increasing temperatures, overfishing, pollution and sedimentation. Despite these threats, some reefs show remarkable resiliency and are thriving. Established with a grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation in 2012, the Reefs Tomorrow Initiative (RTI) was a collaboration among scientists from academic institutions and conservation organizations who used computer models and field studies to investigate how healthy reefs respond to threats. RTI worked closely with managers to help ensure they can integrate these new scientific findings into their coral reef management efforts across the Pacific. CORAL was honored to be a part of this amazing collaborative effort, and we are excited to share some early results of RTI's work here.

RTI Partners: American Museum of Natural History, Coral Reef Alliance, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Stanford University, University of California - Santa Barbara, University of North Carolina - Wilmington, Victoria University of Wellington



Mapping seafloor life

RTI researchers wielding digital cameras took thousands of photographs of the reef and then used a computer program to stitch those pictures together into images called mosaics. These mosaics provide an incredibly detailed map of who lives next to whom on a reef. From these images, we assembled the largest benthic data set on record: it contains an astonishing 65,000 individuals. We are using these data to understand how different communities interact to affect resilience and to track changes in life on the seafloor over time.



Bridging reef resilience research and conservation

By working with managers from several nations across the Pacific—including *Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Palau*—RTI researchers learned that coral reef resilience cannot be decoupled from community resilience. We found that local communities preferred to talk about how they can be resilient to climate change instead of how they are vulnerable; talking about resilience makes communities feel strong and capable. RTI researchers also learned that what we say and who says it are both important in working with local communities. In particular, communities are more likely to respond positively to a local messenger.



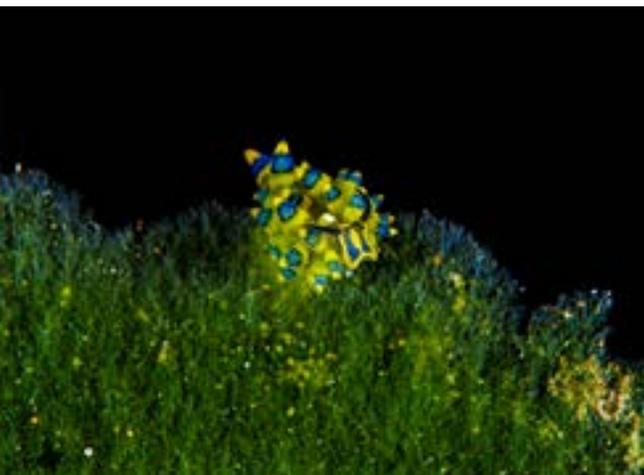
Tracking grazing parrotfish

It is well-known that herbivore grazing can help reefs by controlling algal growth. But how many grazers are enough? Can this information be used to balance the health of the reef with the need for fisheries? RTI researchers working to answer this question spent hundreds of hours following parrotfish around Palmyra's reefs recording what they were doing. They used these data to generate detailed maps of how fish use the reef. Through this work, we learned herbivore behavior can affect reef health; when human activities alter this behavior, it can interrupt important processes that make a reef resilient.

A picture is worth a thousand words, and when you ask a community to share their environmental concerns around coral reefs through photography, you uncover an extraordinary tapestry of images that tells an authentic story.

In Indonesia, two small fishing villages in Bali—*Tulamben and Amed*—are popular tourist destinations and feature some of the best diving on the island. Dive tourism, fishing and farming are the lifeblood of these communities, and there is a deep concern about the health and management of local coral reefs.

We are working with our partners in these and other villages along the north coast of Bali to establish a network of well-managed marine protected areas that are ecologically connected and socioeconomically sustainable. Effectively managing this network requires the support of local communities. To garner this support, community concerns and knowledge must be understood and incorporated into management plans.



“ We always thought the trash had come from elsewhere brought here by the ocean current, but the pictures we took show that it came from our communities, so we have to stop blaming others for this problem. ”

Nengah Polos

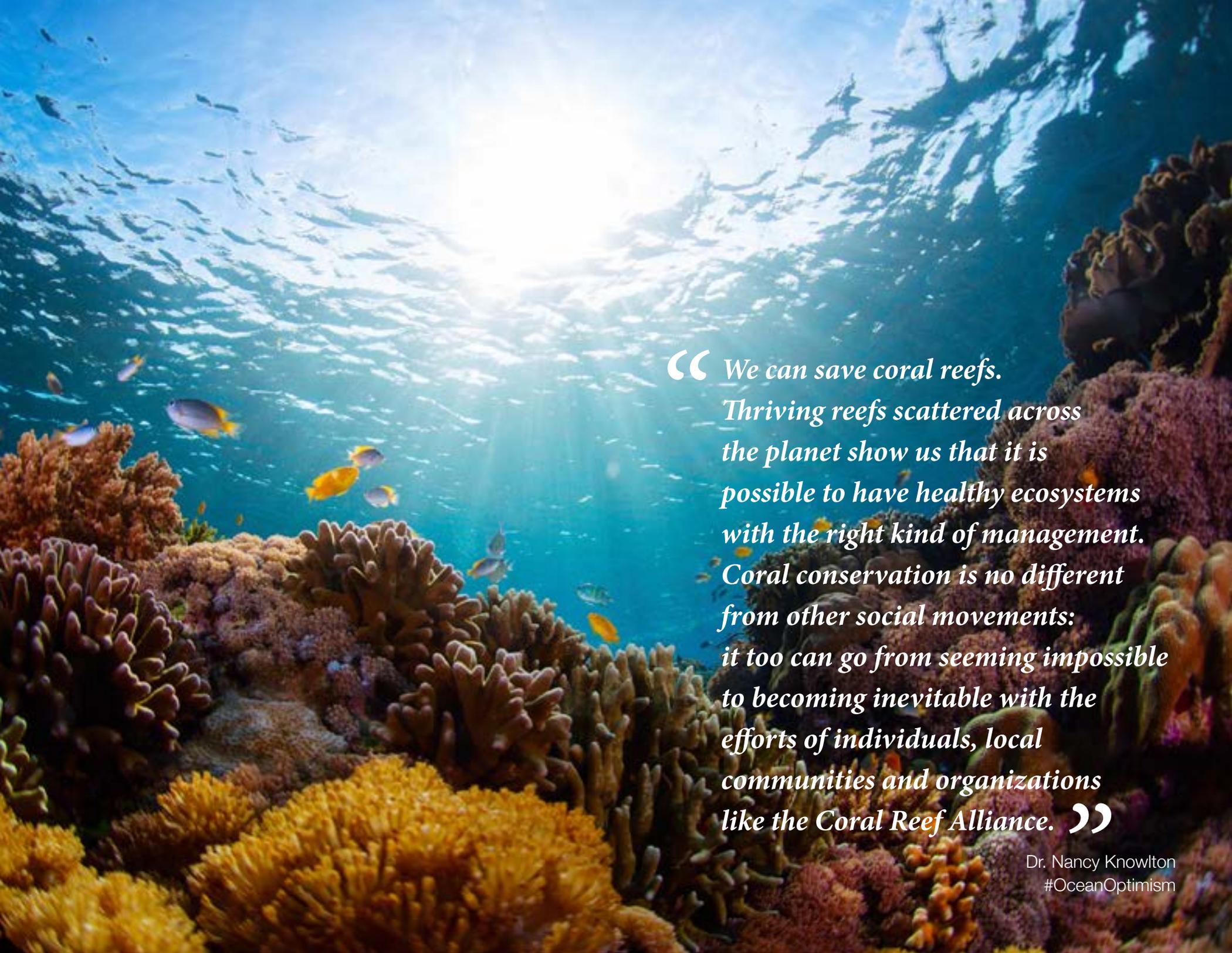


To build an effective management plan, CORAL needed to give villagers a way to share unfiltered opinions on core concerns. We partnered with Lens of the Community of Indonesia through the Photovoices program to help residents document their natural environments, cultures, traditions and lifestyles with photos.

The photos tell powerful stories about how community members interact with nature. They identify issues and challenges that may affect management priorities. In both Tulamben and Amed, the photos identified sedimentation, trash and tourism activities as major threats to reefs.

This was the first time community members had an opportunity to voice their concerns and their vision of their future and the future of their reefs. Together, we can use these photos to build management plans, and help governments and local NGOs better prioritize conservation initiatives.



An underwater photograph of a vibrant coral reef. The scene is filled with various types of coral, including large, rounded, brownish-purple structures and smaller, yellowish-orange ones. Numerous small, colorful fish, including yellow and blue ones, are swimming around the reef. The water is clear and blue, with sunlight filtering down from the surface, creating a bright, shimmering effect. The overall atmosphere is one of a healthy and thriving marine ecosystem.

“ We can save coral reefs. Thriving reefs scattered across the planet show us that it is possible to have healthy ecosystems with the right kind of management. Coral conservation is no different from other social movements: it too can go from seeming impossible to becoming inevitable with the efforts of individuals, local communities and organizations like the Coral Reef Alliance. ”

Dr. Nancy Knowlton
#OceanOptimism

Every minute of every day, we benefit from earth's ecosystems, which provide us food, medicines, and even the air we breathe. However, ecosystems are changing at an alarming rate due to a combination of local and global stressors. Perhaps the most pressing question in conservation is: *what can we do to help ecosystems continue to provide the benefits upon which humanity relies?*

Nowhere is this question more urgent than on coral reefs, where reef-building corals are disappearing in a way that puts the entire ecosystem at risk. The good news is that research shows that corals can adapt to changing conditions.

With funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, CORAL has launched a new project to understand how management can facilitate coral adaptation. Over the next couple of years, we will develop a mathematical model of how networks of well-managed reefs—*what we call an Adaptive Reefscape*—can ensure a bright future for corals and those who depend on them. This model will help us build an Adaptive Reefscape in the Mesoamerican Region, including Mexico, Belize, Guatemala and Honduras.

Thanks to work that is already underway by CORAL and our many partners, we can establish an Adaptive Reefscape in the Mesoamerican region within a decade. Much of the Mesoamerican reef is located in marine protected areas (MPAs). However, many of these MPAs do

not have effective management systems, and local groups struggle to finance their conservation efforts. Also, there are gaps in the region, where critically important reefs—*for their diversity and connectivity*—have been overlooked by conservation. We will use our improved scientific understanding to identify and protect those reefs that are essential to a regional network.

In the years to come, we will collaboratively ensure that four critically important coral reef regions are advancing Adaptive Reefscape initiatives: the Mesoamerican Region, Fiji, Indonesia and Hawai'i. Together, we will work to ensure that reefs, and the communities that depend on them, thrive for generations.

[Join us and help unite communities to save coral reefs.](#)

“*Through a project that connects cutting-edge science with on-the-ground conservation, CORAL is spearheading a new approach to managing coral reefs for their adaptation potential. This bold project will explore how entire communities of organisms can adapt to global change, and it has the potential to improve the outlook for coral reefs and many other ecosystems. This project could be a real game-changer for conservation.*”

Mary Turnipseed, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation



Coral Reef Alliance

Statement of Activities for the Year Ended June 30, 2015

Support and Revenue

Individual contributions	\$ 847,502
Foundation & government grants	662,718
Other revenue	62

Total support and revenue 1,510,282

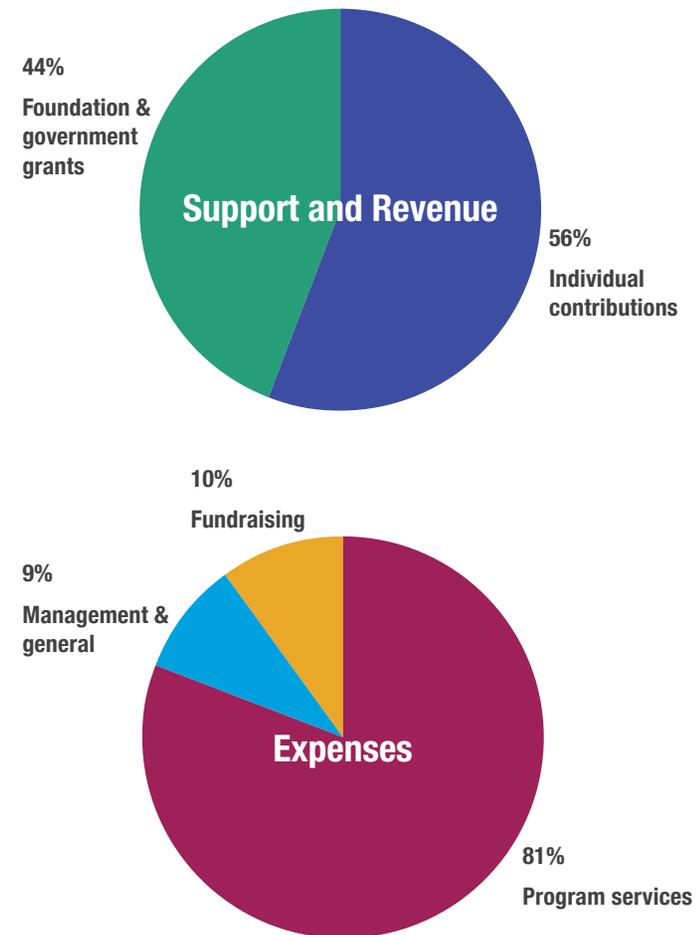
Expenses

Program services	1,918,828
Management & general	225,062
Fundraising	236,636

Total expenses 2,380,526

Net Assets

Change in net assets	(870,244)
Net assets, beginning of year	2,493,495
Net assets, end of year	<u style="text-decoration: underline double;">\$1,623,251</u>



Your gift makes a difference for coral reefs. We are truly grateful to all who made gifts to support us in uniting communities to save coral reefs. The financial results presented on this page are summarized from our audited June 30, 2015 financial statements; the complete statements can be obtained online at www.coral.org or by calling **510.370.0500**. Thank you!

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“*Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion.*”

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

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Gifts were made by the following in memory of those in italics

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Leslie Mulford



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