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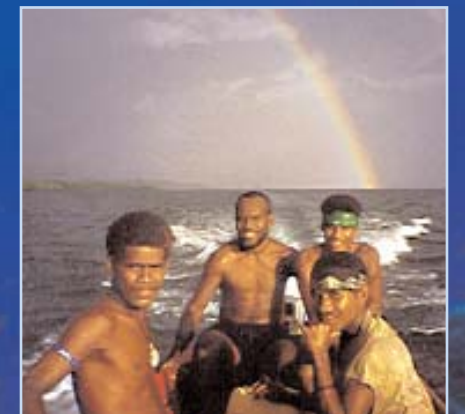
## About Counterpart

Counterpart International has over 40 years of experience helping build the capacity of NGOs to help people meet their own self-defined needs in a sustainable way. Begun as the Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific, Counterpart has broadened its scope and now implements community-based development programs in more than 58 nations in environmental resource management, NGO capacity building, primary health care, microenterprise development, and humanitarian aid.

Counterpart International's Environment and Natural Resources Division works to restore ecosystems and improve local livelihoods by assisting communities to manage their natural resources for the long term. We work with communities in Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Belize, Bosnia, Ukraine, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Vietnam, Central Asia, Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

# CORAL GARDENS

## Restoring Reefs and Rural Livelihoods



COUNTERPART

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# The Coral Gardens Program:

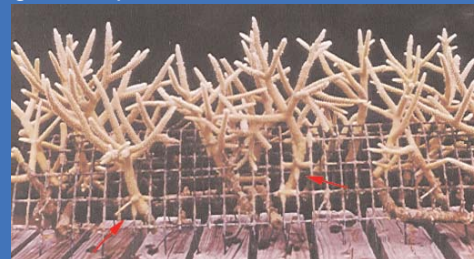
**C**oral reefs are among the earth's most important and imperiled ecosystems, which affect both the coastal and marine environment well beyond their own immediate environs. Counterpart's **Coral Garden Program** is an innovative initiative to conserve and restore threatened coral



reef ecosystems and fisheries while also promoting sustainable tourism. The program brings together fishing communities, government agencies, resorts, dive operators and local NGOs to establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), prevent over-fishing and reduce land-based pollution threats to coral reef ecosystems.

**T**hrough the pioneering work of Dr. Austin Bowden-Kerby, the Coral Garden™ Program is developing low-tech, cost effective systems for growing and transplanting corals to restore degraded reef ecosystems and community-based fisheries. The program integrates state-of-the-art science and marine biology with the traditional knowledge developed over millennia by Pacific Island nations whose cultures

and economies depend upon the sustainable management of their coral reefs and coastal fisheries. The Coral Garden Fiji site has been designated by the United Nations International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) as a model project and recommended for global replication.



## Linking Coral Reef Restoration with Tourism

- It provides communities with low-cost, easily learned methods of coral reef restoration and conservation.
- Restoring reef health improves fisheries, food security and local management of MPAs.
- The program improves market access and income generation to local fishing communities.

## Coral Gardens and Community Development

- It creates a public-private partnership model within the tourism sector to support reef conservation and local communities.
- The program enables communities to participate in coastal resource planning and management.
- It creates positive interaction and cul-

tural exchange between local communities and tourists.

## South-South Technical Assistance and Development

- Coral Garden methods developed among Pacific Island Nations are now being transferred to the Caribbean, where local people have quickly realized their potential for preserving the environment and helping local communities.
- Counterpart's training model is responsive to urgent needs among urban and rural poor and within the tourism sector to ensure that increasing tourism developments help the poor rather than exacerbate income disparities.
- The Coral Garden model is replicable to other coastal regions around the world and has particular relevance after the Asian tsunami as research shows how degraded reef and coastal environments made coastal communities more vulnerable.



## Success Story: Coral Reefs in Dominican Republic

Tourism is the largest and fastest growing sector of the economy of Dominican Republic and the wider Caribbean region. The tourism industry in the DR and the Caribbean depends upon healthy coral reefs and beaches to continue to draw visitors.

The quality of the coral reefs and beaches of the DR are among the best in the Caribbean and the primary reason tourists visit the region. Yet, the reefs within the MPAs of Punta Cana, Bayahibe, Samana and Sosua Bay are in serious decline, based on extensive base-line monitoring data and analysis from the government and by observations of the private sector dive industry and local fishing communities.

Primary human-induced causes of the decline of coral reefs in the MPAs of these areas are localized land-based pollution, negative tourism and recreational diving impacts and overfishing-driven ecological imbalances.

In addition, compliance with the no-fishing areas in the MPAs is low among many local fishing communities, due to a lack of awareness and insufficient involvement in the MPA design, monitoring and management process.

Two "keystone" species vital to reef health and once abundant are now in serious decline in all DR coral reef systems: *Acropora cervicornis* (staghorn corals) and black-spined *Diadema antillarum* sea urchins.

