

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

- Working with the Vanua-tai Network of Environmental Monitors, we conducted 6 distinct expeditions during the season spanning twelve islands and dozens of villages, reaching out to Vanua-tai in remote areas and mobilizing new monitors. Our work focused on helping build new sub-networks, fostering traditional Tabu conservation areas transition into the science-based Community Conservation Area (CCA) program, establishing reef conservation projects including Crown of Thorn Starfish control ,coral reef education and coral mariculture, instituting Climate Change Adaptation projects, expanding opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement among the Vanua-tai and building local capacity for environmental stewardship. Our recent video, The Vanua-tai Trainers of Trainers (in Bislama with English subtitles, 24min) documents this exciting work. You can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSGbBUHnnjo>

EXPEDITION ONE

Cyclone Relief – Port Vila – Mataso – Emae – Buninga – Nguna – Port Vila

Our first expedition with Vanua-tai Willie Kenneth focused on cyclone recovery efforts in the Shepherd Islands. Island Reach delivered seeds purchased with IR donations, as well as clothing and water containers on behalf of the Red Cross and Live & Learn Vanuatu to these hard hit islands. Included visit to Nguna where Island Reach crew member and volunteer, Dominic, undertook the rebuilding of a locally-owned eco-tourism bungalow destroyed by the cyclone.



EXPEDITION TWO

Port Vila – Emae – Malekula – Luganville

- a) Delivery of four tons of foods to the island of Emae on behalf of an Australian nonprofit donor.
- b) Day trip to Cook's Reef with Willie K. and 5 community members from Emae, including 3 young women.
- c) Transportation of a total of 6 Vanua-tai Monitors from Pele, Emae, and Malekula islands to the AGM in Luganville
- d) Networking building in Maskelynes with Vanua-tai from Pele, Emae, Maskelynes. Launching of the new Netan-Netas Environment Network
- e) Reef assessments in Maskelynes & Crown of Thorn Starfish cleanups in Lutes & reef and COT assessment Crab Bay. Video produced for Maskelyne Islands showing 2014/2015 community cleanups.
- f) Production of 40 minute video documenting the work of the Vanua-tai on this expedition, screened at the AGM for all participants, alongside IR presentations.



EXPEDITION THREE

Luganville – West Coast Malekula (Wiawi, Bamboo Bay, Lembenwen, Melip)

- a) Travel with 4 Vanua-tai monitors from AGM to West Coast Malekula
- b) Crown of Thorns cullings with communities of Melip, Lembenwen, Bamboo Bay. Videos produced in each locale.
- c) Re-establishing Vanua-tai connections in Melip and building new interest in the program.
- d) Community presentations with video screenings and conservation actions in all four villages, setting the stage for network development.
- e) Facilitating launching of the new Napi-Nata-Lili Environment Network of NW Malekula. Documentary video produced about the launching and ceremony provided to the community with plans for IR and Vanua-tai return.
- f) Reef Check training, reef assessment and activity with the community of Wiawi & video documentation



EXPEDITION FOUR

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Luganville – Ambae – Maewo – Pentecost – Lamap, Malekula

- a) With Ronneth John, and joined by Vanua-tai Charlie Eric, we reached out to remote Vanua-tai in communities on SW Ambae, SE Maewo, North and South Pentecost and enlisted new members. Presentations in two communities in Pentecost.
- b) Shot underwater video in South Pentecost for the Vanuatu Department of the Environment for nationally-designated conservation area.
- c) Meeting with communities of Lamap and the building of new Vanua-tai; supporting the extension of the Malamap Netan-Netas Environment Network; community presentation and outreach.
- d) Video built for Lamap (part of Malamap Netan-Netas Environment Network) integrating ecotourism and conservation as part of network formation and expansion.



EXPEDITION FIVE

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EpiWorking with Donald James, Island Reach filmed and produced a documentary about a meeting of sub-network members in North and Central Epi and helped initiate a coastal erosion project and creation of a mural at the local airport to support donations for the network.



EXPEDITION SIX

Epi – Emae – Buninga – Efate

On Buninga Island in the Shepherds, Island Reach interviewed and filmed community members regarding the status of their water security as part of a project for Live & Learn Vanuatu. Working with 5 Vanua-tai from Epi, Emae, and Nguna on board Llyr, we enlisted a new Vanua-tai monitor from Buninga who traveled with the team to Efate to attend the Nguna-Pele Climate Change Adaptation Conference.



- Cyclone Pam devastated many islands in Vanuatu. Working with our local contacts in Disaster Management and the Agriculture and Food Security Cluster, and with donations received in the Spring, Island Reach was able to purchase seeds to replace some of the crops destroyed by the cyclone. Onboard Llyr, we set out on our first expedition of the year through the hard-hit Shepherd Islands, distributing seeds as well as tons of donated foods and materials for several NGOs that needed help getting supplies to remote islands. We quickly threw together a 2 minute video documenting this May circuit, showing some of our activities and the devastation in the Shepherds. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqw3jwLRBjs>
- In early June, Janis and Brooks spent a week traveling the south Malekula coast by trading boat, truck, and plane with a team from Aveda to learn about their work to integrate their market activities of acquiring nut oils with support for conservation activities in the communities they work with. Aveda and the Global Greengrants Fund are supporting Island Reach's collaborations with these communities as help mobilize Vanua-tai and new sub-networks.
- In June, Island Reach traveled with 7 Vanua-tai to Luganville, Espiritu Santo to attend the Vanua-tai Annual General Meeting where we screened a video produced in the field during the voyage about building community networks in Malekula and the

value of IR field operations.

- Island Reach was invited to help organize and present at a 6-day conference funded by the Asian Development Bank as part of the Coral Triangle Initiative held in Nguna Pele and titled Training of Trainers on Climate Change Adaptation and Natural Resource Management. We transported Vanua-tai to the conference, screened the IR Trainers of Trainers video, and led 3 workshops: a) introducing the IR 2015 expeditions of network building, community actions, and Community Conservation Area developments; b) Coral Gardening; and c) problems of sustainable revenue development for Vanua-tai networks. Currently, we are producing a video about this amazing conference which should be available on Youtube late Fall 2015.
- We were asked by Live & Learn Vanuatu to return to Buninga Island, the site of the water security project that IR helped undertake in 2014, to do an assessment and report about the status of water post Cyclone Pam and with the onset of El Nino. We produced a video about the current situation on the island which is being shared among NGOs in Vanuatu and is also helping local NGO Wita Aid obtain funds to make fresh water deliveries to Buninga using their barge equipped with a water desalinator. See the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lsl14pcRzU4>
- Janis and Gavin were fortunate to attend and film a Youth Climate Summit in Port Vila. This program was a mock UN climate conference in which high school and college students from Vanuatu got to role play and experience some of the dynamics and elements of climate change negotiations. That video is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jst9Hu6vnuM>
- Stateside: On November 16th, our partner, Mission Blue, ran a Partner Feature about Island Reach. MB is an initiative of the Sylvia Earle Alliance “to ignite public support for the protection of Hope Spots – special places that are vital to the health of the ocean – through the creation of a global network of marine protected areas to safeguard 20% of the ocean by 2020.” You can see the Island Reach story here. <http://missionblue.org/2015/11/island-reach-is-on-conservation-expedition-in-vanuatu-melanesia/>. And IR made a presentation to the Distant Learning Center of the Red Clay school district in Delaware.
- Aqualung USA has generously increased their in-kind support of Island Reach with 46 wetsuits for Vanua-tai and 100 snorkel packs for school children's reef education! And IR has picked up important new funders and sponsors in Aveda, the Global Greengrants Fund, and Columbia Sportswear.

- We made lots of videos this year, many of which can be viewed on our Island Reach Youtube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoNURUIEbWf1ePEd5TS5nrg>. All the ones available there have English subtitles. Several videos were produced for community use and do not yet appear on Youtube.
- Island Reach was joined by Johns Hopkins student intern, Elaine Carpenter for 7 weeks. Elaine is studying public health and international development at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD.
- The Island Reach team grew with two new Ni-Vanuatu Project Directors and Technical Advisors, Willie Kenneth and Ronneth John. Willie is a long-time member and coordinator of the Nguna-Pele Marine & Land Protected Area. He has special focus on mariculture and coral gardening activities. He has had extensive exposure in Climate Change Adaptation methods in his work with Dr. Christopher Bartlett and SPC-GIZ. He also works passionately on local governance and land management issues with a concern to protect indigenous land tenure and custom practice. Ronneth is a seasoned conservation volunteer and charismatic orator who speaks many languages. He has been with the Vanua-tai Resource Monitors for 19 years and the Nguna-Pele Marine & Land Protected Area for 13. His expertise includes negotiating and writing Community Conservation Area management plans as well as building Vanua-tai Environmental Networks with different communities: In addition, Dr. Christopher Bartlett and Peter Whitelaw have joined IR as Advisors alongside experienced Vanua-tai Donald James (link to team page)
- Beginning December 1, 2015 IR Project Coordinators Willie K. and Ronneth J. are undertaking a 3 week expedition along the West coast of Malekula where they will be working on conservation management plans with villages, establishing a huge ridge to reef conservation area in the Northwest, then turtle tagging with Donald James, network development between Bamboo and Lembenwen villages, and then on to the SE coast and Lamap for further network strengthening, sea cucumber education, and ecotourism development related to corals and dugongs. In January 2016 Willie and Ronneth head to the northern Bank Islands to further network development begun by IR last August. This will prep the region for engagement by RV Llyr and crew in 2016. Similar preparation work is also underway to prepare for Llyr's return to Vanuatu in 2016 up through the Southern islands.

So, a very productive and dynamic year and these are just the main highlights!