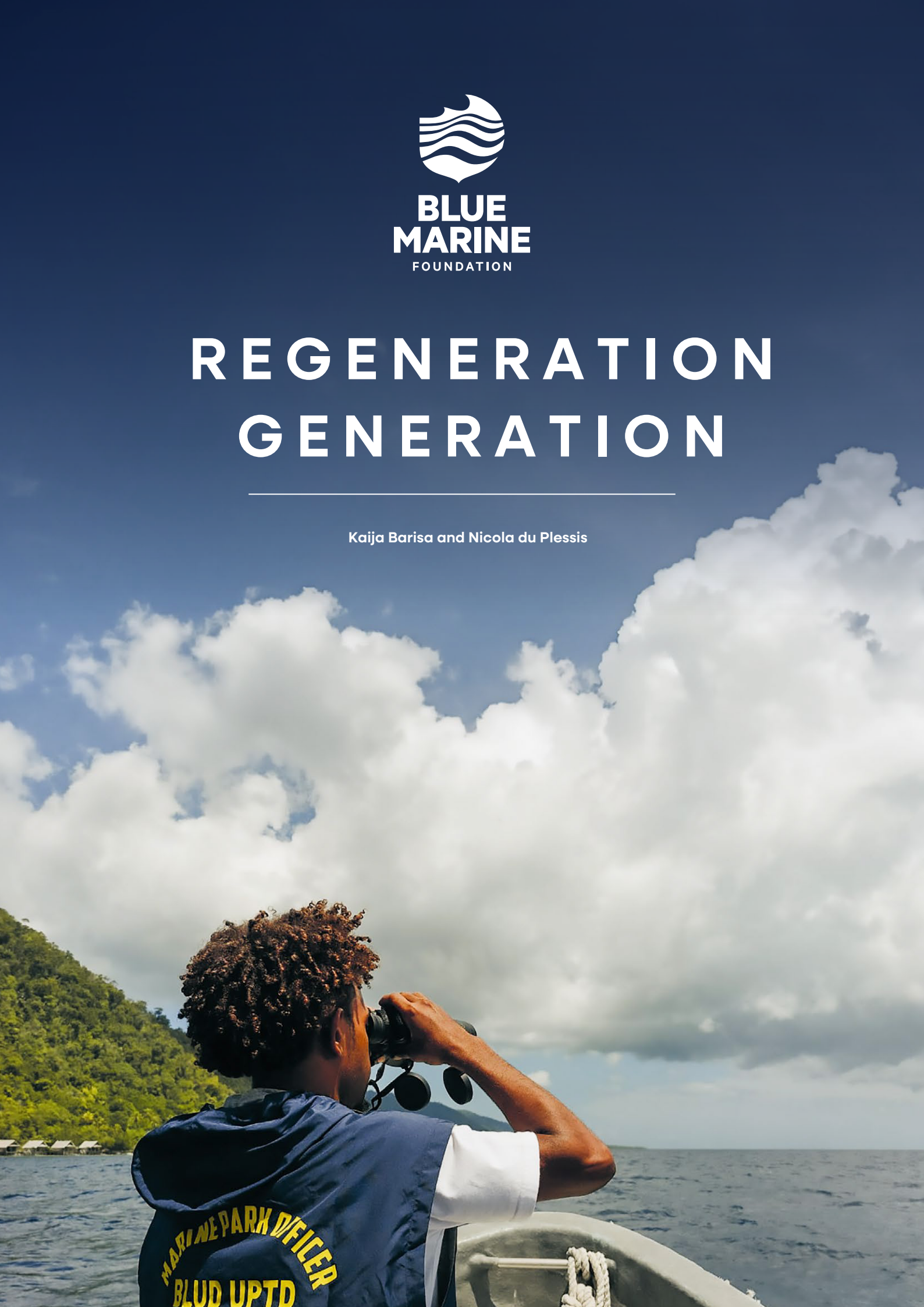
BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION

REGENERATION GENERATION

Kaija Barisa and Nicola du Plessis



FIVE PROGRAMMES ACROSS FIVE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Summary of case study profiles included in the qualitative analysis



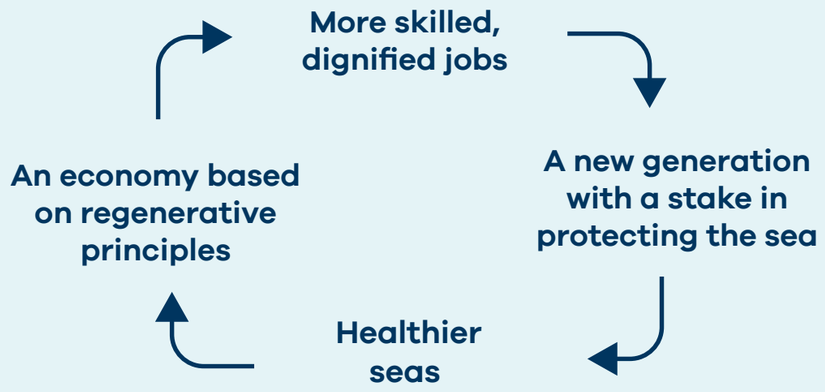
Marine protection stalls when it is perceived as a threat to livelihoods

In most cases, governments are not short of political will to protect their marine environment. They often hesitate over the cost of protection and the perceived cost in lost jobs, mostly in fishing.

Too often, ocean protection is framed as a trade-off between protecting nature and protecting livelihoods. This perceived tension can become a barrier to ambitious marine conservation, particularly in coastal communities where people's incomes, identities and ways of life are closely tied to the sea. But what if conservation could create opportunities for local communities and encourage young people into ocean roles while strengthening ocean recovery? **Regeneration Generation was developed to explore this possibility.**

We identified five programmes across Greece, the Maldives, Mexico, Indonesia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines that are working to align marine conservation with local livelihoods. Working with local partners, we explored these initiatives through the perspectives of the people experiencing the transition themselves: how their livelihoods and relationship with conservation had changed, and what lessons these approaches might offer other coastal communities.

Using a common set of questions, we explored changes in income and livelihood security, pride and identity, and attitudes towards marine conservation, comparing participants' experiences before and after becoming involved in each programme.



How do transitions to a regenerative blue economy typically occur?

Within fisheries

Change fishing practices: seasonal closures, selective gear, premium markets for sustainable catch.

Away from fisheries

New roles built on local knowledge: tourism, citizen science, monitoring and ranger work

Findings at the project level

Based on 36 surveys and interviews across the five case studies, the study assessed the impacts of regenerative blue economy transitions covering changes in total income, income stability and security, wellbeing, pride and identity, job dignity, and perceptions of conservation. Respondents were also asked about the key factors enabling success, barriers to participation, and recommendations for future programme design.

Greece AMORGO**RAMA** Transition within fisheries	Fishers reported stronger stewardship, pride and support for conservation through participation in community-led fisheries closures despite ecological and economic benefits not yet being fully realised. Compensation for lost fishing income emerged as the key factor in enabling participation and support for the programme.
Maldives Fish for Tomorrow Transition within fisheries	Fishers reported improved income security, more reliable markets and stronger support for marine protection, with participation linked to premium prices and guaranteed seafood buyers. The main concerns raised were the need for stronger fisheries management and equitable benefit sharing between fishers and the tourism sector.
Mexico Proyecto Tiburón Transition away from fisheries	Former shark fishers who transitioned into tourism and research reported improved income stability, safer working conditions, greater pride in their work and stronger conservation attitudes. Barriers to participation include training and equipment costs, temporary income losses and concerns around cultural identity.
Indonesia Raja Ampat Dive Guide School Transition away from fisheries	All participants reported improvements in income, wellbeing and confidence after gaining skills in diving and tourism, with many becoming role models within their communities. Conservation and tourism careers offer pathways to better quality jobs for young people but require additional language and professional skills development.
St Vincent and the Grenadines Wild Nurseries Transition away from fisheries	Community ranger roles improved income security, wellbeing, conservation awareness and pride, with participants valuing both the additional income and the opportunity to contribute to marine protection. The main challenge was perceptions that rangers were acting against other fishers, highlighting the need for broader engagement and clearer communication.

Across the case studies, a consistent picture emerged

Where fishers and coastal people gained secure income, a meaningful role and a visible conservation purpose, pride and support for protection followed.

1

Income security improved more consistently than total income.

2

Pride, dignity and identity within their community improved across all case studies.

3

Support for conservation increased for all participants.

Within fisheries (Greece and Maldives)
Transitions within fisheries are often less disruptive because fishers can retain their skills, identity and connection to the sea while adopting more sustainable practices. Success depends on credible incentives, such as premium prices and reliable markets, or compensation and fisher-led co-management. Key risks include unequal benefit sharing, dependence on a small markets, weak enforcement and uncertainty over whether conservation measures will actually deliver ecological recovery. Long-term success therefore requires strong governance, participation, monitoring and sustainable financing.

Outside fisheries (Mexico, Indonesia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
Transitions into tourism, conservation, monitoring and ranger roles can reduce fishing pressure more directly and generate benefits such as safer work, improved income security, greater pride and stronger stewardship. However, they also carry higher barriers to entry, including training, equipment costs and temporary income losses, and can create social tensions or a sense of identity loss. Success depends on equitable access, long-term funding and the management of potential new environmental risks through displacement.

The opportunity ahead

The programmes that participated in Regeneration Generation are small and, in many cases, still at an early stage. Yet together they point towards significant potential. With the right support, regenerative livelihoods could help shift coastal communities from being seen as beneficiaries of conservation to being recognised and supported as its long-term stewards, creating opportunities for people while strengthening the recovery and resilience of the ocean.

SIX ACTIONS TO SCALE THESE SCHEMES ELSEWHERE

For governments, funders and conservation practitioners, drawn from what participants themselves recommended.

1 **Create long-term financial incentives and transition support** including funding for training, equipment, certification and temporary income support during transitions.

2 **Put communities at the centre of programme design and decision-making** through participatory governance and co-management approaches.

3 **Invest in skills and education pathways for young people,** including access to training and leadership to encourage emerging careers in tourism, conservation, monitoring and sustainable fisheries.

4 **Strengthen conservation governance through monitoring, enforcement and transparent communication** so communities can see clear evidence of demonstrable environmental and socioeconomic benefits.

5 **Guard against displacing pressures elsewhere** through strong safeguards, environmental standards and fair benefit-sharing.

6 **Build climate resilience into livelihood planning** supporting communities to diversify income while restoring and protecting the ecosystems on which local economies depend.

As countries work towards protecting 30 per cent of the ocean by 2030, investing in the next wave of conservation-aligned professionals will be as important as investing in the protected areas themselves.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Read the full report:

BLUE MARINE FOUNDATION

3rd Floor South Building, Somerset House,
Strand, London, WC2R 1LA
info@bluemarinefoundation.com
www.bluemarinefoundation.com

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