Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) in Solomon Islands

Presented by Meshach Sukulu

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Solomon Islands context

- Located in the **South Pacific Ocean**, **northeast of Australia** and **east of Papua New Guinea**

- Made up of **over 900 islands,**

- 9 Provinces and **over 3000 coastal communities**

- Population: **around 700,000 people**

- Home to **Melanesian**, **Polynesian**, and **Micronesian** communities

- Over **80 languages** spoken — showing rich **cultural diversity**

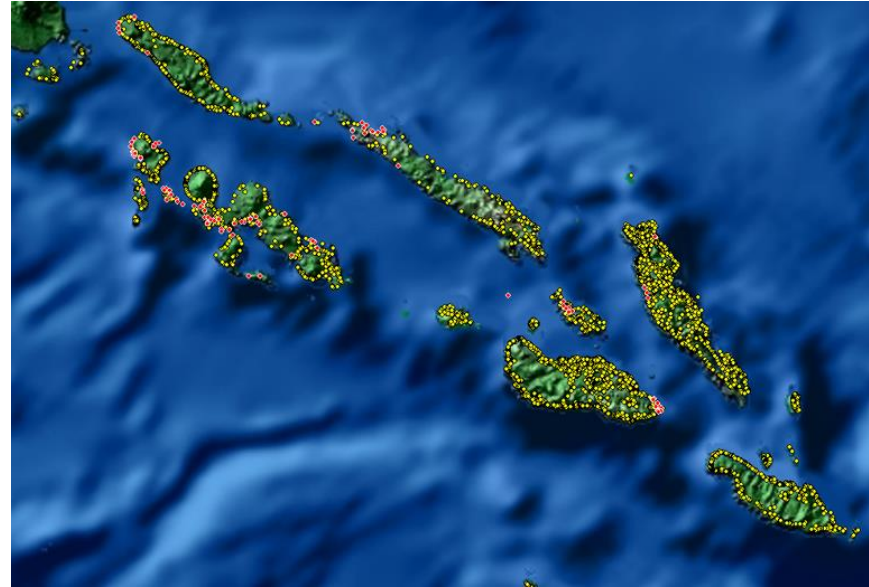- Economy depends on **fisheries, forestry, and agriculture**

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Importance of coastal fisheries to food security, nutrition and culture

- 🌊 **Over 80%** of Solomon Islanders live in **rural coastal areas**, relying on reefs, mangroves, and lagoons for daily needs.

- 🍲 **Fish is the main food source** — over **90%** of local fish comes from **small-scale coastal fisheries**, providing **60–70%** of animal protein.

- 💰 **Fishing supports livelihoods** — about **half of rural households** fish for food or income; in some provinces, it makes up **70% of household earnings**.

- 🙆 **Women play key roles** in post-harvest activities like marketing and processing.

- 🌺 **Marine resources hold cultural value**, tied to **customary tenure, identity, and traditions** such as **shell money and ceremonies**.

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Why CBRM was adopted

- 🌊 **Coastal fisheries** are vital to the livelihoods, food security, and culture of Solomon Islanders.

- ⚠️ Increasing **population, market demand, and climate change** are putting pressure on marine resources.

- 🏝️ **Communities are traditional custodians** of coastal areas and best placed to manage their own resources.

- 👩‍💼 **Government capacity is limited** — few fisheries officers, many remote islands, poor transport and communication networks.

- 🌿 **Communities hold rich ecological knowledge** — they know habitats, breeding and nursery grounds, and seasonal patterns.

- 🤝 They also understand **local ownership rights, disputes, and social dynamics**, ensuring fair management.

- ✅ Therefore, **CBRM was adopted** as the main national approach, empowering communities with support from government and partners.

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How CBRM has been adopted (Policies and Strategies)

Adoption of CBRM has been guided by several **key national and regional frameworks**

Through national policies (CBRM Strategy 2021–2025, Fisheries Policy 2019–2029).

Regional Frameworks (A New Song, Pacific CBFM Scaling Strategy. Melanesian Spearhead Group Roadmap for Inshore Fisheries Management and Sustainable Development 2015), Solomon Islands has institutionalized community-based management as the foundation for coastal fisheries governance.

Governance Levels Involved in CBRM in Solomon Islands

Puriasi Mangrove Management Plan

1 National Level – MFMR & MECDM
- Lead agency for fisheries policy and CBRM strategy.
- Provides training, technical support, and coordination with partners
- 6 officers focus on CBRM within the Inshore Fisheries Division.

2 Provincial Level – Provincial Fisheries Offices
- Coordinate and implement CBRM with communities.
- Monitor plans and link villages to MFMR.
- Typically, 2–6 officers per province - depending on province size and funding.

3 Community Level – CBRM Management Committees
- Develop and Implement Management Plan rules
- Supported by provincial officers, NGOs, and research partners.

4 Development Partners (Across All Levels)
- **WorldFish:** technical support and scaling.
- **SPC:** training, policy, and monitoring.
- **LMMA Network:** regional learning.
- **TNC, WWF, LLCTC, TNC & SICCP:** site-level and ecosystem management.
- **Donors (DFAT, MFAT, ACIAR, USAID, JICA):** funding and capacity support.

Where Are We Now?

Solomon Islands CBRM Strategy 2021–2025

Purpose: To scale up and strengthen community-based management of coastal and marine resources across the Solomon Islands, ensuring sustainability, food security, and resilience for coastal communities.

🧩 Seven Programmatic Areas

1. **National CBRM Network** – connect practitioners and partners for coordination, learning, and support.

2. **Provincial Government CBRM Programs** – strengthen provincial capacity and link communities with national systems.

3. **Information, Education & Communication (IEC)** – raise awareness and promote behavioral change.

4. **Capacity Building** – train communities, provincial officers, and facilitators.

5. **Sustainable Livelihoods Integration** – link CBRM with alternative income and food security activities.

6. **Community Resilience & Climate Change Adaptation** – integrate CCA and disaster risk reduction into CBRM.

7. **Implementation, Monitoring & Reporting** – improve data collection, learning, and accountability.

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Where Are We Now?

National CBRM Statistics from 2015 to 2025

- **700+ Communities** received CBRM awareness and dissemination of information.

- **180+ communities** across Solomon Islands have established or are implementing **CBRM initiatives**

- **8 of the 9 provinces** have at least a few active CBRM sites, with **Malaita, Western, and Guadalcanal** having the highest concentration.

- **CBRM training** has reached **over 150+ Provincial Fisheries Officers and Community Facilitators** since 2015.

- MFMR, MECDM and partners have produced **CBRM guidelines**, **community management plan templates**, and **monitoring tools** to standardize practice nationwide.

(Note: Numbers vary slightly across reports, but these are the best available national-level estimates.)

Linking into Regional Networks – Lessons and Knowledge Sharing

1. Regional Collaboration Platforms

- Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMA) Network
- SPC (Pacific Community) initiatives

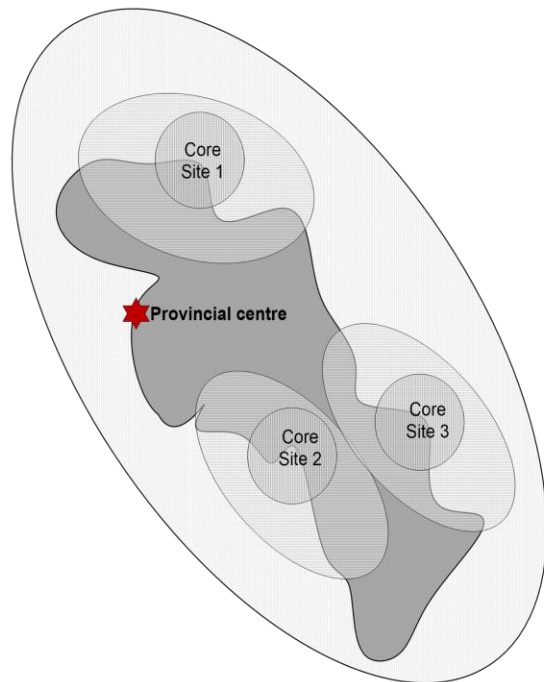**2. Knowledge Sharing and Learning** – **activities include:**

- Regional workshops and trainings, field visits.
- Participation in fisheries and coastal management conferences

3. Scientific Publications and Regional Evidence

- SPC Bulletins and Technical Reports
- WorldFish Briefs
- Peer-reviewed journal articles

CBRM Scaling Example: The Malaita Experience

Management area of Core Site
Area of influence of Core Site
Provincial media and information coverage

Source: Govan et.al.2011

The '*lite-touch*' approach:

It focuses on **building the capacity of one "core" community**, which then helps to **inspire and guide neighboring communities** to start their own management efforts — allowing CBRM to spread naturally and cost-effectively across an area.

Testing the 'lite-touch' approach ran for 3 years (2012–2015) — **covering:**

•**2012:** Mararo community requested assistance, and the first site scoping and awareness visit was conducted.
•**2013:** Drafting and finalizing the management plan; formation and registration of the Mararo Community-Based Organization (MCBO).
•**2014–2015:** Implementation of the plan, awareness outreach to 14 neighboring villages, and follow-up visits.

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CBRM Scaling Example: The Malaita Experience

The *Community Facilitators (CFs)* model_*super 'lite-touch'):*
Trains community representatives from multiple villages and sends them back to lead CBRM in their own communities.

27-30 July 2021

29 August to 2 September 2022

Workshop minutes, Second Community Facilitator's CBRM Training Workshop, Auki, Malaita Province
(Funded by PEUMP CP $20-204)
Janet Saeni-Oeta and Delvene Boso

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CBRM Scaling Example: The Malaita Experience

The roll-out of the CFs model

- **2016–2020:** CF model tested; **26** CFs from **21** communities trained; **12** management plans created and implemented

- **2020–2022:** Model expanded **; 68 CFs** from **44 communities** were trained; **12 management plans** were created and implemented; 10 still in draft.

- **2022-2025**: In total now — **90+ CFs** across **65+ communities**, directly influencing local marine resource management **— 34 management plans across 42 communities.**

The Way Forward: Scaling CBRM in Solomon Islands

1. **National Level**
   - Focus on **networking and coordination**, as highlighted in the National CBRM Strategy.
   - Ensure proper coordination among **NGOs, government agencies, donors, and other stakeholders**.
   - Promote **information sharing** and alignment of CBRM efforts nationwide.

2. **Provincial Level**
   - Support **Provincial CBRM Programs** directly through donors or projects.
   - Ensure **strong coordination** between Provincial Fisheries Divisions, NGOs, and relevant stakeholders.
   - Prioritize **capacity building**, including:
     - Gender inclusivity training
     - Standardized CBRM toolkits
     - Conflict resolution training (e.g., land disputes)

3. **Community Level**
   - Focus on **local capacity building**, like programs provided for **Provincial Fisheries Officers (PFOs)**.
   - Support communities in implementing and managing **locally-driven CBRM initiatives**.
   - Strengthen **monitoring, enforcement, and adaptive management**.

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Thank You