

Empowering emerging leaders in marine conservation: the growing swell of inspiration

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ABSTRACT

1. Young marine conservation leaders can create and mobilize change when they are inspired, empowered and actively involved in decision-making processes.

2. This paper provides a journey overview of the opportunities, challenges and commitments for young conservation leader empowerment within the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its Commissions to create change.

3. Young conservation leadership contribution to the development and delivery of the 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress highlights the drive by this cohort to inspire and mobilize change.

4. Global marine conservation initiatives being led by transformative young leaders in partnership with senior leaders with the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Young Professionals (WCPA YP) group and the recently established IUCN WCPA Young Professionals Marine Task Force are actioning change.

5. This paper highlights a critical need for the global conservation sector to invest in current and emerging young conservation leaders for creating change.

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INTRODUCTION

The 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress (the Congress) held in Sydney, Australia had in attendance the largest cohort of emerging and current young conservation leaders under the age of 35, including many with a passion and commitment specifically to marine conservation. A crucial

initiative of the Congress was the dedication of Stream 8 *Inspiring a New Generation* towards empowering young leaders and connecting youth to parks and nature. This investment allowed young leaders to have roles as stream co-leaders, session chairs, workshop facilitators and plenary keynote speakers. The support of the Congress' executive organizers was a crucial step for empowering young

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leaders who are inspired, have hope, use novel technologies to push boundaries, and communicate with audiences beyond the current conservation silo.

'The most important attribute in the toolkit of a conservation biologist is leadership' (Dietz *et al.*, 2004).

Why is leadership so important? Manolis *et al.* (2008) define leadership to be, 'inspiring and mobilising others to achieve purposeful change'. We adopt this definition in this paper as it allows anyone who identifies the need for change, including young people, to exercise leadership. Having purpose and mobilizing others on a journey of change requires leadership (James, 2015), which is why it is so important in nature conservation. Traditional leadership has often been top down, however, with new and adaptive conservation models and approaches, combined with fewer funding opportunities, the leadership paradigm has changed to one of shared responsibility, accountability and roles that conservationists can play in creating change.

Young conservation leaders are well placed to help create this change as they bring new values and ways of thinking that can influence significant debates of either national or international importance (Ho *et al.*, 2015). The effective participation of youth at the Global Landscapes Forum affirmed that young people want to be listened to and taken seriously in matters that affect them (GLF, 2014). Despite their input, however, there is still a risk that young leaders are increasingly feeling disenfranchised from decision-making processes (Ho *et al.*, 2015).

This paper provides an overview of the opportunities, challenges and commitments for young conservation leader empowerment within the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and its Commissions for creating change. It highlights global marine conservation initiatives being led by transformative young leaders, where the majority are voluntary members of the IUCN Task Force on Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS), IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Young Professionals (WCPA YP) group and the recently established IUCN WCPA Marine Young Professionals Task Force (Task Force). This paper concludes with key recommendations to increase young leadership and capacity development opportunities within the field of marine conservation

to ensure: succession planning, ongoing support to shape inspiring young marine conservation leaders into the future, and purposeful change for the field of marine conservation.

BACKGROUND: THE IUCN YOUNG CONSERVATION LEADER JOURNEY

'It is well known that, among those who are preoccupied with the future of protected areas, there are a great many grey heads and far too few youthful ones. I am told that under-representation of the youth is a widespread phenomenon in many fields associated with protected area management. This is, of course, a matter for concern, because without the involvement of the youth, the future cannot be secured.' Nelson Mandela, 5th IUCN World Parks Congress 2003, Durban, South Africa.

During the 5th IUCN World Parks Congress in Durban, 2003, Nelson Mandela challenged his colleagues to engage more meaningfully with young people, to build their capacities, channel their enthusiasm and inspiration so that they can play an important role in conserving life on earth. This was the first time that the important role of young people wanting to work in the conservation landscape was highlighted in an international forum. This speech was influential, highlighting emerging issues in the international conservation discourse, where among other challenges, was the empowerment and capacity development of young people to become future conservation leaders. Resonating from Mandela's strong words was the development, and commitment to, by IUCN Council of Outcome 6: *Younger generations are empowered in relation to protected areas* in the Durban Action Plan (IUCN, 2005a), the key manifesto from the 5th IUCN World Parks Congress.

Outcome 6 initiated the first step for young leaders within, and engaging with, IUCN Commissions and programmes of work to be officially recognized. This was closely followed by the establishment of an 'inter-Commission task force on intergenerational integration within IUCN' (IUCN, 2005a) led by IUCN WCPA and the passing of Resolution 3.029, *Capacity Building of Young Professionals* (IUCN, 2005b). These commitments set a precedent for

IUCN and triggered a series of future resolutions and recommendations pertaining to capacity development and empowerment of young conservation leaders (Table 1).

IUCN WCPA was the first Commission to develop and implement a Young Professionals Programme where, through meaningful engagement, development and empowerment, young leaders were involved in the Programme on Protected Areas. The Commission did so by: increasing the young leader membership, providing young leaders with roles within the WCPA Secretariat, and creating training and award opportunities for youth excellence in conservation (Jana *et al.*, 2008). The Commission also established a space for a youth mentor on its high-level steering committee and formed the WCPA Young Professionals group (Jana *et al.*, 2008).

Through the support and mentorship of senior IUCN WCPA members, the Young Professional group created and disseminated an online survey to capture and understand the voices and concerns of young people engaged in protected areas and nature conservation work in the lead up to the 5th World Conservation Congress. More than 278 young people responded, representing 54 countries across

five continents, showcasing this network's reach amongst the conservation movement (Jana *et al.*, 2008). This survey provided the platform for young professionals to identify key issues in their journey to professional empowerment, which included the lack of support from senior professionals, funding for conservation initiatives and research led by young people, and specialized training, capacity building programmes and collective platforms to network and share experiences (Jana *et al.*, 2008). Among the list of recommended actions to address these challenges was the need to facilitate and establish a global alliance or network of young people engaged in protected areas and conservation work (Jana *et al.*, 2008).

This recommendation influenced the creation of the IUCN Task Force on Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS) and the appointment of young leaders on various IUCN Commission Steering Committees (Table 2: IUCN IPS, 2015). A guiding principle for the IPS Task Force is 'fostering ethical leadership for a just, sustainable and peaceful world' (Resolution 3.029: IUCN, 2008) by recognizing and affirming that 'many young persons have well-informed, insightful and innovative contributions to make to

Table 1. List of IUCN Resolutions and Recommendations pertaining to young leader engagement and empowerment between 2003 and 2014

IUCN Event	Year	Resolution or Recommendation	Document
5 th World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa	2003	Outcome 6: <i>Younger generations are empowered in relation to protected areas.</i>	Durban Action Plan (IUCN, 2005a)
3 rd World Conservation Congress, Bangkok, Thailand	2004	Resolution 3.029 <i>Capacity Building of Young Professionals.</i>	3 rd World Conservation Congress Resolutions and Recommendations (IUCN, 2005b)
4 th World Conservation Congress, Barcelona, Spain	2008	Resolution 4.098 <i>Intergenerational partnerships: fostering ethical leadership for a just, sustainable and peaceful world.</i>	4 th World Conservation Congress Resolutions and Recommendations (IUCN, 2008)
9 th World Wilderness Conference (WILD9) Mexico	2009	Resolution 8 <i>Importance of engaging Young Professionals in international conservation work.</i>	9 th World Wilderness Conference Resolutions (WILD9, 2009)
5 th World Conservation Congress, Jeju, Republic of South Korea	2012	Resolution 008 <i>Increasing youth engagement and intergenerational partnership across and through the Union.</i>	5 th World Conservation Congress Resolutions and Recommendations. (IUCN, 2012)
2014 World Parks Congress, Sydney, Australia	2014	Stream 8: Recommendation 6 <i>Empower young people to be current and future leaders through their own efforts with support by IUCN, protected area agencies, NGOs and other sectors, through programmes that mentor and reward young conservation professionals ensuring real and meaningful contributions to decision-making and strategic thinking.</i>	The Promise of Sydney. A strategy of innovative approaches and recommendations to inspire a new generation in the next decade (IUCN, 2014).

Table 2. IUCN Commissions that have Young Professional Programmes as of 2016

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
IUCN Commission for Education and Communication (CEC)
IUCN Commission for Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)
IUCN Commission for Environmental Law (CEL)
IUCN Commission for Species Survival (SSC)
IUCN Commission for Ecosystem Management (CEM)

sustainability research and decision-making processes, strategic planning and policy-making, and effective action projects and programmes' (IUCN, 2008). In more than a year of its establishment, there were 100 young leader IPS members representing more than 40 countries across the world (IUCN IPS, 2015).

The IPS executive comprises young leaders who are actively involved and represent the Young Professional Programme of various IUCN Commissions. The role of the IPS is to provide advocacy and knowledge brokering between the IUCN Secretariat and Young Professional groups across all IUCN Commissions. Continual support by the IPS executive and IUCN Commission Chairs has empowered young leaders to lead initiatives at international events, for example, the Youth and Intergenerational Journey at the 5th World Conservation Congress in 2012. By leveraging delegates at this international gathering, young leaders were able to collaborate with senior professionals to encourage IUCN Commissions to implement and action key recommendations. Owing to this intergenerational support, a range of initiatives and programmes of work were designed and delivered by young leaders across IUCN Commissions. This included a range of workshops designed by young leaders at the 2010 Healthy Parks, Healthy People Congress and the 10th World Wilderness Conference. These face-to-face opportunities allowed young leaders to meet one another, share their successes, experiences and on-going challenges, co-create action plans that feed into larger IUCN programmes of work and co-design international-scale projects (IPS, 2015).

These initiatives addressed the needs of a growing global network of young conservation leaders within IUCN. Representatives of this international group of passionate youth and young professionals gathered at the Third International

Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC3) in 2013, to share their views and express their priorities about the future of marine conservation.

Organized by the WCPA Young Professionals Group, this gathering acknowledged the important role that marine protected areas (MPAs) play for the conservation of the marine environment while allowing the sustainable use of marine resources. The dynamic synergies of inspired young people working together and sharing their views about effective protection and management of the marine environment, led the group to write *A New Generation of Marine Conservation*. This declaration sets out a series of priorities for the maintenance of a healthy marine environment and is part of a paper trail of statements produced by young leaders at various conferences, indicative of a growing global movement of youth alliances caring for nature and protected areas. IMPAC3 laid the foundations for a stronger collaboration between WCPA Marine and the Young Professionals Group. This included a shared work programme for the 2014 World Parks Congress where the WCPA Marine Young Professionals Task Force was officially launched. The 2014 World Parks Congress provided an important platform for initiatives that empowered *all* young conservation leaders.

THE 2014 WORLD PARKS CONGRESS JOURNEY: EMPOWERING YOUNG MARINE LEADERS

Capacity building through intergenerational collaboration

The determination, passion and desire shown by young leaders in IUCN Commissions to increase horizontal decision making and knowledge sharing, develop leadership skills, create inclusive networks, and develop innovative approaches to move beyond traditional thought, was exemplified at the 2014 World Parks Congress. Most notable was the collaboration of IPS and WCPA young leaders with senior leaders of Parks Canada, the Australian New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage and the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) to co-design,

develop and deliver Stream 8 *Inspiring a New Generation* for the Congress.

This inter-generational collaboration provided a pathway for WCPA and IPS young leaders to contribute to the Congress legacy document, *The Promise of Sydney*, by shaping and word-smithing Recommendation 6 in the *Strategy of Innovative Approaches and Recommendations to Inspire a New Generation in the Next Decade*, where it stipulates to 'Empower young people to be current and future leaders through their own efforts with support by IUCN, protected area agencies, NGOs and other sectors, through programmes that mentor and reward young conservation professionals ensuring real and meaningful contributions to decision-making and strategic thinking' (IUCN, 2014).

This important Congress output was developed by young leaders attending the pre-Congress Capacity Development Workshop that was facilitated by IPS and WCPA Young Professionals (Lopoukhine *et al.*, 2014; IPS, 2015). This workshop brought together young conservation leaders from 14 countries across the globe, thus establishing a strong young leader community that provided support for one another throughout the Congress. In addition to developing *The Pact for Parks, People and Planet: An Action Plan* (the Pact, <http://wcpayp.org>), a new *Interleadership Toolkit* was discussed and a framework developed.

To conclude the pre-Congress Capacity Development Workshop, a one day Young People's Leadership Workshop, hosted by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and facilitated by Rebecca Koss, Karen James and Lisa Tarca, was made possible through the efforts and support of Australian Government Ambassador for the Congress and WCPA Member, Peter Cochrane. This workshop brought together 60 global young conservation leaders to identify and discuss the qualities of great leadership and learn techniques and tools to overcome challenges and barriers in becoming a purposeful leader of change.

The Commitment to Taking Action: The Pact for Parks, People, and Planet

A key commitment of Congress young leaders was to create a pact through which anyone can commit

to take action. *The Pact for Parks, People and Planet: An Action Plan* forms part of *The Promise of Sydney*, the overarching legacy of the Congress. The Pact is founded on the need to act now to create change for nature conservation through a collective and shared responsibility across generations. The coming together of young leaders from across the globe to create the Pact highlighted a desire to move away from traditional patriarchal top-down approaches to conservation, which stymie innovation, creativity and inclusiveness (Koss, 2014). A fundamental point in this plan is to empower current and emerging young conservation professionals through mentorship and strengthening of their skills, capacities and networks. To invest in current and emerging young conservation leaders, will lead to effective, transformative, powerful leaders now and into the future.

The Interleadership Toolkit: Investing Now for the Future

'The millennial generation, born between 1980 and 2000, now entering employment in vast numbers, will shape the world of work for years to come. Their career aspirations, attitudes about work, and knowledge of new technologies will define the culture of the 21st century workplace.' (PWC, 2011)

A key issue identified by young conservation leaders in attendance at the Congress is the lack of a comprehensive framework to support and develop young conservation leaders in the workplace. To address this gap, a group of WCPA young professionals initiated the development of the Interleadership Toolkit.

The Toolkit provides a framework for career development and it is envisioned that it will be adopted and embedded in organizational processes around the world. The toolkit has a focus on actions and outputs that embraces an intergenerational approach to maximizing co-beneficial outcomes in the workplace – for both the young conservation leader and the senior professional. This toolkit articulates the investment benefits for developing young conservation leader careers which include, but are not limited to organizational succession planning, intergenerational co-learning through mentorship, and implementation of innovative and

creative ideas for creating change. The toolkit is being developed by young conservation leaders in close collaboration with IUCN senior leaders and other organizational managers globally.

Intergenerational conversations

The support of senior leaders is critical to empowering young professionals and creating change in conservation approaches. Intergenerational support brought a refreshing new agenda and energy to the Congress. Many opportunities discussed in this paper were initiated through a combination of critical support by senior IUCN experts and the motivation and initiative of young marine professionals.

The Congress provided several opportunities for intergenerational conversations and collaboration to progress conservation outcomes. As part of Stream 8, Daniela Benavides, co-founder and CEO of marine conservation and education organization ConCIENCIA in Peru (see case study below) was invited to represent the young professional voice at the Congress. Daniela provided insightful views, from a young marine conservation leader perspective, during key-note sessions with senior government representatives in addition to an inspiring speech at the closing ceremony.

The IUCN IPS hosted an Intergenerational Dialogue workshop at the Congress. Co-led by young leaders Grace Mwaura and Melanie Zurba, this workshop allowed senior professionals and young conservation leaders to sit at the table together to identify key issues that limit intergenerational partnerships and dialogue. Workshop outputs highlighted the need to address gaps in employment opportunities for young conservation leaders and the need for senior professionals to invite young leaders to be part of decision-making processes.

Co-led sessions by WCPA YP, IUCN IPS and Global Youth Biodiversity Network included: *Empowering young people to be agents of change*, *Pushing boundaries: young people protected area challenge*, *Young conservation catalysts*, and *Empowering young leaders*. These sessions allowed young leaders to facilitate and deliver conversations that focused on engaging young people in conservation, via intergenerational dialogue. Session

feedback highlighted the engaging nature of young leaders, with collaborative approaches creating a welcoming, participatory feel (R. Koss pers. comm.).

IUCN has one of the world's most comprehensive ranges of authoritative publications, reports, guidelines and databases for conservation and sustainable development (IUCN, 2015). The work of WCPA members and key events like the World Parks Congress continue to produce leading expert publications for peer-reviewed journals and IUCN best-practice guidelines. This paper was initiated by one of the three leading young marine co-authors, with another providing editorial support as a guest editor for this issue. The association of young professionals, with senior WCPA leaders, has provided opportunities for young professionals to make critical contributions to various high profile publications, including co-authoring the marine chapter of the latest IUCN *Protected Area Governance and Management* publication with senior IUCN Marine and WCPA professionals (Day *et al.*, 2015).

This collaborative and intergenerational approach, where young marine leaders were supported to design and deliver programmes and activities for the Congress, moved away from the previous top-down approach. The young leaders were able to infuse their innovation and creativity into the delivery of the work.

Engagement in innovative marine solutions

The Marine Cross-cutting theme, OCEANS+ Pavilion and Oceans Reception

Two key platforms underpinned the WCPA Marine presence through the Cross-Cutting Marine theme at the Congress: the Oceans+Pavilion, which hosted the majority of marine events, and the VIP Oceans Reception. Young marine leaders volunteered their time to support the managers of the Pavilion in the lead-up to and throughout the Congress and were central in organizing the Oceans Reception. In addition to providing networking opportunities and knowledge sharing between young and senior leaders, the Oceans +Pavilion showcased some of the world's most innovative solutions for marine conservation.

Embracing Innovative Marine Technology: Networking for nature: the future is cool

“Millennials” use of technology clearly sets them apart. One of the defining characteristics of the millennial generation is their affinity with the digital world. They have grown up with broadband, smartphones, laptops and social media being the norm and expect instant access to information.’ (PWC, 2011).

A highlight in delivering Stream 8 was the marine plenary *Networking for nature: the future is cool*. Developed and delivered through collaborative leadership between WCPA Marine senior and young leaders, this plenary focused on new technological initiatives for marine and coastal conservation. An intergenerational panel of speakers showcased new innovations considered to be game changers in the way knowledge from marine and coastal conservation research is approached and disseminated. Marine technology programmes showcased during this plenary included Global Fishing Watch, Reactive Reefs, Google Underwater Street View and Catlin Seaview Survey:

- Global Fishing Watch

This data technology platform leverages satellite data to track global fishing to identify and assess fishing effort intensity in space and time. Global Fishing Watch is a partnership between SkyTruth, Oceana and Google that monitors commercial fishing which can assist in identifying illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The system records vessel locations through the Automatic Identification System (AIS) collected by satellite and codifies the specific patterns of movement as either ‘fishing’, ‘non-fishing’ or ‘suspicious’ based on a behavioural classification model (Global Fishing Watch, 2015).

- The Google Underwater Street View Programme

This programme is part of Google Earth Outreach and compliments Catlin Seaview Survey data. By monitoring marine ecosystems, it aims to inspire people to learn more about ocean change and the importance of its protection. This programme

includes the important component of ocean mapping, where each Google Map image is a digital GPS record of underwater and coastal environments that can be used to monitor change over time (Google, 2015).

- Catlin Seaview Survey

Catlin Seaview Survey creates baseline records of the world’s coral reefs through underwater visual imaging technology. This process accurately describes a specific section of reef that can be revisited in time and compared against previous available information. The Catlin Global Reef Record can be combined with data from other ocean research providing data for scientists, reef managers and decision makers, and local communities (Catlin Seaview, 2015).

- Reactive Reefs

Reactive Reefs is an interdisciplinary coral reef imaging and mapping project developed by Stanford aeronautics graduate student Ved Chirayath. This mapping process enables 3D reconstruction at the sub-cm scale. Titled *Fluid Lensing* this technology removes distortions caused by surface wave movements and enhances resolution of anything within the water column and on the sea floor (Reactive Reefs, 2015; Chirayath and Earle, 2016).

The growing swell of inspiration: young leaders making a difference in marine conservation

Beyond the 2014 World Parks Congress, there are many young people displaying purposeful leadership in marine conservation around the world. Empowered, dynamic, innovative and transdisciplinary, young leaders are applying innovative and creative ways to address marine conservation while being mentored and supported by senior leaders.

A number of NGOs were established by young marine conservation leaders to empower local communities to be stewards and leaders in protecting their marine environment. Alasdair Harris and Vedharajen Balaji, founders of Blue Ventures and OMCAR Foundation respectively,

identified that by empowering local communities to look after their marine environments, through a combination of traditional customs and application of technologies, could also improve the community's health and well-being.

- Blue Ventures with Dr Alasdair Harris

Dr Alasdair Harris founded Blue Ventures over a decade ago when surveying Madagascan coral reefs. Concerned about fish landing declines, Vezo communities that live along the southern coastline of Madagascar worked with Alasdair and Blue Ventures to trial a closed marine area. On re-opening, the local community experienced a large increase in landings and fisher income. News of the success of this closed marine area trial spread to other coastal communities leading to the creation of the country's first Locally Managed Marine Area. This success highlights that non-national marine conservation practitioners need to recognize and understand the needs of local coastal communities. The closed area trial demonstrated a workable solution by focusing on a model that local communities could adopt and implement themselves. This creates a sense of responsibility, ownership and stewardship within local communities. There are now 65 Locally Managed Marine Areas and 75 local communities managing 11% of the Madagascar's sea bed, which is equivalent to an area greater than 11 000 km² (Blue Ventures, 2015).

- OMCAR Foundation with Dr Vedharajen Balaji

Dr Vedharajan Balaji is the Founder and Director of OMCAR Foundation, a grassroots non-government organization working for marine conservation, sustainable fishing and awareness in Palk Bay, India. OMCAR promotes sustainable fishing through the participation of the local community in marine and coastal ecosystem conservation practices. Local communities collect baseline information about the present status of Palk Bay's coastal ecosystems including mangroves, seagrass beds and coral reefs. Over-exploitation of local fishery products that are exported to international markets and increased population growth, with associated pollution

impacts, cause localized coastal and marine ecosystem destruction. Cumulatively, these pressures create a number of challenges for the OMCAR Foundation. The energy of young people from local areas, in combination with local knowledge and employing traditional techniques during suitable seasons, has increased mangrove plantation success leading to higher catches (OMCAR, 2015).

There are also examples that showcase a highly innovative and creative way to engage with new generations. Multidisciplinary nature-based marine education increases understanding and awareness of the ocean from children of Peruvian rural fishing villages to school children in the USA.

- ConCIENCIA with Daniela Benavides

CEO and Founder Daniela Benavides is a young Peruvian conservation leader. ConCIENCIA means both awareness and with science. Dwindling fish stocks combined with destructive fishing practices will challenge the current and future livelihoods of coastal children who live in South America. Coastal communities can be the most effective stewards but many lack the education to effectively manage their local natural resources. Since 2010, ConCIENCIA has been building children's connection to nature and each other, promoting healthy childhood development and conservation values through nature-based education. Conservationists, educators and communicators join architects, photographers and musicians to build marine education programmes for underprivileged communities across Peru and other South American nations, where dependence on natural resources is high but understanding of the processes that support them is low. Lesson plans are shared and workshops are delivered by this diverse team of change makers. ConCIENCIA's main source of funding is via revenue-generating environmental education and team building programmes for schools, companies and travel groups (ConCIENCIA, 2015).

- One More Generation with Carter and Olivia Ries

One More Generation (OMG) was founded by siblings Carter (age 14) and Olivia (age 12) Ries in

2009 during the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Olivia and Carter learned that plastic pollution was a greater threat to marine animals than all oil spills in total across the world. Spending five months educating themselves on the issue, they collaborated with teachers and a retired principal to write a curriculum that teaches school children to be the solution of plastic pollution. The Plastic and Recycling Awareness Curriculum has been written to match the latest United States of America National and State Standards for science and is infused with maths, literacy and art. Delivered to over a dozen USA schools, this successful programme teaches students that they can affect change while creating buy-in from their parents who are more apt to listen to their children than to an outsider. Future programme launches include South Africa, United Kingdom and Australian schools. External organizational funding via school grants provides financial resources for programme implementation (One More Generation, 2015).

Citizen science can be a powerful tool for leveraging active stakeholder participation in providing solutions to marine conservation issues. This tool is adopted by Pierre-Yves Cousteau and Cousteau Divers, whose programme allows individual divers to contribute to increasing ocean knowledge.

- Cousteau Divers with Pierre-Yves Cousteau

Pierre-Yves Cousteau started Cousteau Divers in 2009, while he was working as a diving instructor in Santorini, Greece. 'I wanted to be more than a passive observer of the degradation of marine life. I felt that with my name I had a special opportunity to make a positive difference, but I recognized that I couldn't do it alone.' With this rationale, Pierre-Yves created a citizen science platform of divers (freedivers and scuba) united to study and protect the ocean. With very simple methods, divers can record their observations of the surrounding ecosystem during their dive. This information can be uploaded onto the Cousteau Divers webportal, which provides a real-time assessment that is evaluated by Cousteau Divers staff. The data collected allows Cousteau Divers to

target marine expeditions where there are gaps in marine knowledge. Highly active members are rewarded for their participation and invited on ocean expeditions.

Recently launched Project Hermes, combines diver collected data with satellite sea surface temperature to understand how the ocean behaves and interacts with climate and how this influences biodiversity at the seascape scale (Cousteau Divers, 2015).

These various case studies highlight that young marine leadership driven by individuals can result in purposeful change. The creation of the IUCN WCPA Marine Young Professionals Task Force was inspired by these global stories of young marine leadership. This unified global network of young marine leaders provides a platform where members can share their successes and failures, where it is more meaningful and inspirational to work together than working alone.

IUCN WCPA Marine Young Professionals Task Force - emergence of a new global network for young marine professionals

This Task Force was created by WCPA Marine in partnership with the WCPA Young Professionals Group, launched at the 2014 World Parks Congress and formally recognized at the 2015 WCPA Steering Committee Meeting. It is led by two young emerging marine conservationists in close intergenerational collaboration with WCPA Marine, the IUCN Global Marine and Polar Programme and the IPS Task Force.

Supporting the work of WCPA Marine, the Task Force provides a communication platform for the growing global network of young leaders under the age of 35 working in marine conservation. The Task Force received over 40 applications from 30 countries within the first week of its launch. It has a diverse membership including from national governments, international and small local non-government organizations, fisheries, local community managed marine conservation groups, university and school students.

The membership structure of the Task Force centrally aligns with WCPA Marine, requiring all Task Force members to undergo full assessment

and approval as WCPA Marine members before being accepted into the Task Force. This provides for a centralized quality assessment process which ensures young marine leaders and the work of the Task Force are aligned with the priorities of IUCN and WCPA Marine. Key to the success of the Task Force is its intergenerational collaboration and partnership, with senior WCPA Marine members providing leadership and guidance to young leaders who provide ideas to help enhance programme decision-making and implementation. In addition, Task Force members are connected to senior WCPA members, both geographically and thematically, to align the interests and skills. This builds the capacity of each young leader in order to maximize their leadership potential.

The first year - 2015 Task Force contributions

During its first year, the Task Force has demonstrated several successes from intergenerational collaboration and empowerment. These successes include:

- WCPA Marine Facebook Page

The WCPA Marine Facebook page is managed by the Task Force in collaboration with the WCPA Marine

Vice Chair. This collaboration has resulted in a 52% increase in ‘likes’ (760 new likes) in the page’s first year. Facebook posts continue to reach an average of over 5000 Facebook users each month. WCPA Marine Facebook page statistics indicate an increased younger audience, with the majority of interactions falling within the 25–34 year age bracket (M. Bianco pers. comm.). Through social media, the Task Force has built partnerships with IUCN Programmes and leading marine initiatives such as *Blue Solutions* (Blue Solutions, 2015) and *Panorama: Inspiring Protected Area Solutions* (Panorama, 2015), as well as Mission Blue, TerraMar, the High Seas Alliance, XL Catlin Seaview Survey and Cousteau Divers (see case study below).

- Creative communication solutions

A key objective of the Task Force is to provide innovative and creative communication solutions for marine conservation. This has led to the development of a new marine infographic series, where the first of this series showcased the important role of marine protected areas in climate change (<https://goo.gl/b9pZ5a>) (Figure 1). This infographic was presented at the United Nations

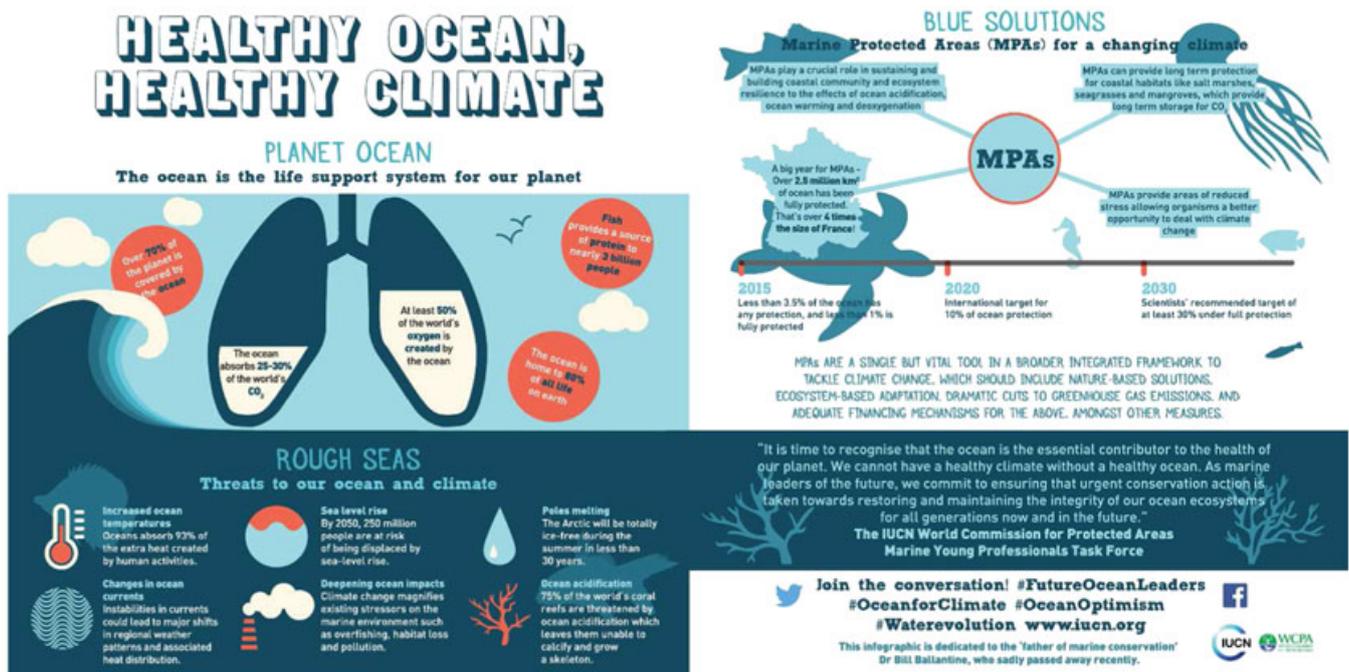


Figure 1. Ocean and climate infographic by the WCPA Marine Young Professionals Task Force.

Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) in 2015, at the Ocean Pavilion and online via social media during COP21 Ocean Day. The infographic presents conservation outcomes in an informative and innovative way in two IUCN languages (French and English). Receiving widespread social media coverage, it was picked up and shared by Richard Branson (www.virgin.com/richard-branson/why-the-ocean-is-crucial-at-cop-21) using the #FutureOceanLeaders hashtag that reached 1.8 million Twitter users.

Progressing the marine leadership journey - The 2016 World Conservation Congress and IMPAC4

A key objective of the Task Force is to facilitate meaningful engagement of young marine leaders in international marine conservation fora. In 2016, the Task Force is progressing the marine leadership journey with its involvement in two major international events: the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress and the 4th International Marine Protected Areas Congress (IMPAC4) in 2017.

The Task Force will promote the professional development of young marine leaders at the 2016 World Conservation Congress by facilitating active engagement and participation in the IUCN Ocean Pavilion, supporting leadership workshops co-developed with senior leaders in intergenerational collaboration, and co-hosting events in collaboration with marine partners such as Blue Solutions and #oceanoptimism to showcase the work of global young marine leaders. Additionally, the Task Force inputs to decision-making processes of the IMPAC4 Steering Committee, where engaging and promoting young marine leaders in global marine programmes of work is a major cross-cutting theme.

Key recommendations for empowering young marine leaders

This paper showcases the continued work and leadership of young marine leaders from around the world. Innovation and drive of young marine leaders to mobilize and inspire purposeful change is most effective when supported by senior marine conservation leaders. The success of such

intergenerational collaboration and support is reflected in the WCPA Marine Task Force.

This continued intergenerational relationship will be an essential ingredient in progressing previous IUCN commitments for young conservation leaders (World Conservation Congress 2004 and 2008) including: training, award opportunities for young marine leader excellence in marine conservation; young marine leader mentorship with high-level WCPA Steering Committee members; designing and fundraising for a young leadership development programme within IUCN and establishing a consortium to coordinate next generation leadership training across the IUCN network.

The success of intergenerational collaboration within WCPA Marine can be applied to the larger conservation field. Organizations including IUCN, national governments, non-government organizations and senior conservation leaders need to recognize the value of, and invest in, current and emerging young conservation leaders. It is this recognition, commitment and investment by senior conservation leaders that will create meaningful engagement and professional development of young conservation leaders. Senior conservation leaders can do this by implementing intergenerational and action-oriented mechanisms such as the Interleadership Toolkit and engaging in active intergenerational dialogue and activities. In turn, young leaders must be prepared to commit and engage in learning and sharing with senior leaders for intergenerational collaboration to be successful. This creates young conservation leaders who are empowered to be influential, purposeful and transformative in creating and mobilizing change now and into the future.

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