

## Jury Statement about Blue Ventures:

### **2011 Buckminster Fuller Challenge Winning Solution**

Blue Ventures, in the shared opinion of this jury, is an exemplary model of applied innovation and a Comprehensive, Anticipatory Design Science strategy. Its multi-scaled approach to the interrelated challenges of biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation embodies the spirit of the work pioneered by Buckminster Fuller.

Founded and led by Ashoka Fellow, Alisdair Harris, Blue Ventures addresses the micro influences of subsistence fishing through education and new practices, transforming the livelihoods of some of the poorest communities in the coastal regions of Madagascar. At the same time, the program addresses the diverse macro influences of climate change in areas with fragile, degraded coral reef systems, increased sea level rise and food web depletion. Within its first four years, Blue Ventures has become one of the strongest Marine Protected Area (MPA) managed programs in the world, spreading its innovative strategy to 25 independent fishing villages along 200 kilometers of Madagascar's coastline.

The core concept of Blue Ventures is to determine the recovery period for a subsistence fishery that is headed toward collapse, and convincing the fishing communities to stop fishing periodically to allow the fish population to rebound. In this way fish catches are increased on a sustainable basis. A strong component of the program is the centrality of the empowerment of women and the importance of addressing population issues. The Blue Venture's team sees that family planning is inextricably linked to conservation management and seeks to enhance women's livelihoods while also offering the family planning education critically needed to balance family size with local resources.

Blue Ventures has been a standout in this year's competition because of its successful scaling and its rich, insightful problem solving approach. By addressing the root causes of the challenges that these fishing villages face, Blue Ventures changes the way people interact with oceans and lays the groundwork for long-term behavioral change. Its full range of economic development initiatives offers each village numerous opportunities for community-owned conservation management that take this program well beyond the typical confines of science-based marine conservation.

Marine biodiversity and climate change are critical issues - at a time when humanity is reaching a global tipping point, we need more best practice models that introduce both micro and macro solutions. According to Conservation International, 34 biodiversity hotspots cover 15.7 percent of Earth's land surface. Globally, half a billion people live within 100 km of reefs, the vast majority in developing world nations with high dependence on coral reef resources for subsistence and income. With this in mind, the success of Blue Ventures could have global impact through replication in numerous fishing villages that are part of these biodiversity hotspots on our planet. It offers an adaptable design template guided by a clearly defined preferred state for Marine Protected Areas worldwide.