Case study on NGOs' Roles on Marine Conservation and Coastal Management

Case 1: Zhoushan Thousand Islands

Marine Environmental Protection Center

1. Organizational Overview

Zhoushan Thousand Islands Marine Environmental Protection Center （舟山千岛海洋环保公益发展中心, hereinafter referred to as Zhoushan Qiandao）was founded in March, 2017. The founder and CEO, Li He, was working at Ningbo Tax Bureau before he joined the eNong Plan（e 农计划）as full-time NGO staff in 2015. After 2-years' service for eNong Plan, he went back to his hometown Zhoushan, Zhejiang and encountered Yonglong Liu, the founder of Shanghai Rendu. Inspired by Yonglong Liu, Li He initiated the first local beach cleanup volunteer activity together with 4 island partners on March 5th, 2017 at Zhoushan. Shortly after this events, Li He and his 4 friends co-founded Zhoushan Qiandao.

Zhoushan is the largest archipelago in China with 1390 islands. The vision of Zhoushan Qiandao is to connect all the non-profit partners across Zhoushan archipelago and make the East China Sea clean again through scientific and interesting approaches. Its mission is to experiment and discover marine environmental protection and coastal restoration model that can effectively function for the Zhoushan archipelago.

Zhoushan Qiandao describes its business as 4 groups:
1) Beach clean-up volunteer activity
2) Monitor and data collection on coastal waste (using ICC Card)
3) Environmental Education for juvenile
4) Youth environmental salon

Zhoushan Qiandao has coordinated 26 islands non-profit partners to organize beach clean-up activities at 18 islands across Zhoushan, involved more than 1500 volunteers and collected more than 15 tons wastes in one year. It has helped set up 4 beach waste monitoring sites around Zhoushan for China Coastal Cleanup and Monitoring Project（"守护海岸线"项目, hereinafter referred to as CCMC）, which has 27 monitoring sites across China so far.

2. Roles Analysis

The roles of Zhoushan Qiandao on marine environmental protection can be catalogued into 3 types, enabler role, expert role and manager role.

1) Enabler

When talking about enabler role, here we use the narrow definition to restrict the target group as only other NGOs or volunteers. Therefore, the enabler is to enable other NGOs or volunteers to protect the marine environment. It is not necessary for an enabler to deal with the marine environmental problem directly, he can only do supportive jobs to help the front-line NGOs doing better. Although many enablers are also doing front-line work, when doing this, they are not playing enabler role rather than manager, expert or other roles.

Zhoushan Qiandao identifies itself as a regional hub. With only one full time staff (Li He), the most important job for Zhoushan Qiandao is to build network for the NGO partners scattered on islands and leverage the local partners' resources (fund, volunteers and supplies) to achieve its mission together.

Zhoushan Qiandao has 26 island partners until now. As an enabler, Qiandao provides following support to its island partners:

a) <u>Network Creation</u>

Zhoushan Qiandao set up a weChat group for all the 26 island partners to make daily communication. They made rules of cooperation together. Qiandao initiated united beach cleanup activities every month; the island partners who participated in the activity will engage local volunteers to do cleanup at their own beach at the same day. For instance, on Sept. 16th, 2017, the International Coastal Cleanup Day, Zhoushan Qiandao served as ICC zone captain and coordinated 6 island partners to participant in the global beach cleanup campaign.

b) <u>Capacity Building</u>

Most of the island partners are not environmental NGOs and almost knew nothing about beach cleanup before joined Zhoushan Qiandao' network. Qiandao's philosophy is to embed marine protection module into the partners original business. This means a lot of work on capacity building. Zhoushan Qiandao has organized the four leaders of the island coastal wastes monitoring sites to participant in the training on beach cleanup technique held by CCMC. Qiandao also held youth environmental salon, that is an informal capacity

building for its island partners and other youth who are interested in environmental protection.

c) Tool Provision

Zhoushan Qiandao provided the ICC waste sorting data card and its guide to all the island partners. These tools are developed by International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) and its China coordinator, Shanghai Rendu. Li He invented a vest on waste sorting for volunteers to wear during beach cleanup activity. The seven colors of the vests represented 7 general catalogues of wastes, named foam plastics, other plastics, paper & textile, rubber, glass & ceramics, metal and others. This vest design has been provided to all the island partners.

ICC data card   (Chinese version)   Pupil volunteers in waste sorting vests

2) Expert

When playing the expert role, the NGOs face with the public, media or academia, in short, uncertain audience. This should include public environmental education and publicity, because this kind of activity requires environmental expertise and faces with the uncertain public.

The approaches Zhoushan Qiandao used for expert role are original scientific research and public environmental education.

a) Original Scientific Research

The International Coastal Cleanup has a mature work process and guide for coastal wastes data collection and reporting. As ICC's Chinese member, Zhoushan Qiandao uses this approach to organize its citizen science project on coastal wastes. The data collected by Zhoushan Qiandao and its 4 islands

monitoring sites are uploaded to the website of CCMC (http://www.ccmc.org.cn/) and the waste analyst report for each activity will be formulated instantly. Then Shanghai Rendu will use these data to make China coastal wastes annual report and China beach litter brand audit annual report.

Volunteers are counting and recording data of wastes   Beach Litter Brand Audit Report

b) Public environmental education

Zhoushan Qiandao held environmental education events for K-12 students, for example, the mobile coastal wastes museum and little coastal inspector events (beach cleanup with more game elements and education purpose). They also invented some interesting teaching tools to attract children.

Mobile coastal wastes museum held at a elementary school

A 3D printed distorted turtle made from recycled plastic and wheat straws produced by one of Zhoushan Qiandao's 5 co-founders' 3D printing firm. Zhoushan Qiandao used it as a teaching tool for environmental education.

3) Manager

When playing the manager role, NGOs provide *direct* solutions to manage marine environmental problems [1]. As a manager, Zhoushan Qiandao's main job is to

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[1] Here I define manager role as the manager of marine environmental problem. I use the term "direct solution" to set manager role apart from watchdog role and advocate role, because these two roles are indirectly solutions, they deal with industry and government to find the upstream solution. Meanwhile

organize its own volunteers to do beach cleanup. It's a kind of management of protected area.

Zhoushan Qiandao has 150 volunteers so far. When organizing its own beach cleanup, Qiandao is directly dealing with the coastal wastes and its volunteers, not the island partners. That makes it as manager (do beach cleanup by itself) not enabler (organize partner NGOs to do beach cleanup together).

3. Conclusion

Zhoushan Qiandao defined itself as a regional collaborative network. Its main job is to mange the network and provide necessary support to the island partners in this network. Therefore, the enabler role is the primary role that Zhoushan Qiandao plays, and the expert role and manager role are the secondary roles. The roles and their respective activities can be summarised in following chart:
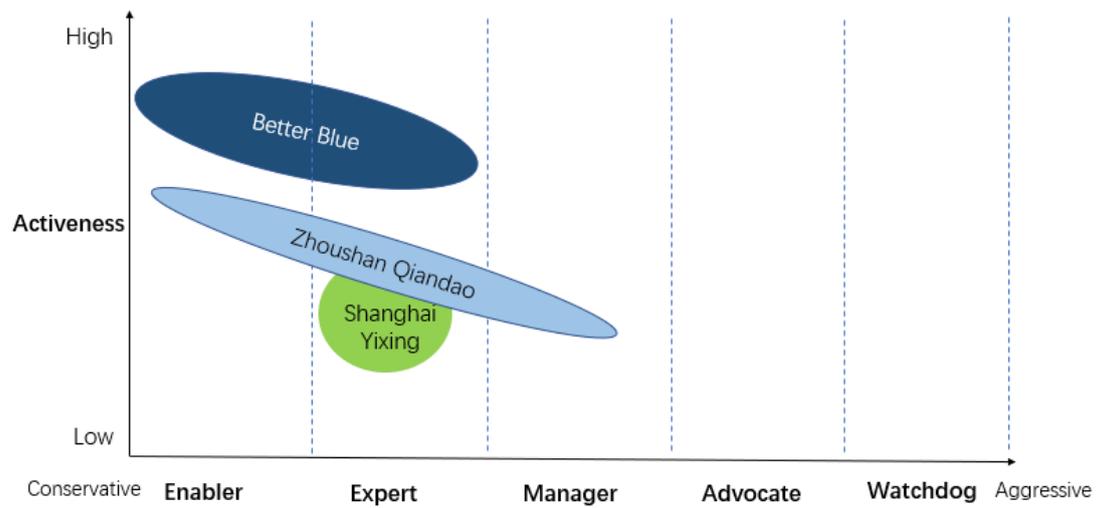
Name	Roles		Activities	Description
Zhoushan Qiandao	Primary	**Enabler**	Network Creation	Coordinate 26 island NGO partners to do beach cleanup and other marine protection activities together
			Capacity Building	Organize partners to attend trainings Hold youth environmental salon
			Tool Provision	Provide ICC data card and its guide Provide the design of waste sorting vests
	Secondary	**Expert**	Original Scientific Research	Collect and report coastal wastes data
			Public environmental education	Mobile coastal wastes museum Little coastal inspector events
		Manager	Management protected areas	Organize volunteers to do beach cleanup

If we put Zhoushan Qiandao and the other two case organizations in one axis, we can have a chart as following. Comparing with the other organizations, Zhoushan Qiandao has a wider range of roles, and a medium activeness on each roles.

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managers role deals with the conservation area and the residents there, and the solution it provided usually just try to manage the downstream problems, not to solve the root cause.