



Education programmes outside of aquariums - Regional interpreter training programme through collaborations among three organizations

By: Yung-Hui Chen

Institution: National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium, Taiwan, Republic of China

Aquariums ought to educate the public about ocean conservation through outreach programmes that extend beyond the limits of the aquarium. Since 2002 the National Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium (NMMBA) has collaborated with PinTung Community College (PTCC) and KenTing National Park (KTNP) to offer a year-long programme to train tourist guides, hotel workers and local people in the Hengchun Peninsula as interpreters. These partners, having diverse expertise but sharing a common vision for conservation, co-present a multi-disciplinary course integrating theoretical knowledge and practical skills. NMMBA and KTNP provide professional teachers and courses in particular disciplines. PTCC handles student administration and serves as a contact center where graduates are introduced to tourists interested in exploring special sites.

After completing the basic course (including marine ecology and interpretation skills), students gain experience serving as intern guides. Finally they take an oral examination set by members representing all collaborating organizations. Graduates are declared certified guides by the head of the National Park in an open ceremony. Graduates apply what they have learnt in their work and daily lives, rooting the conservation concept in the minds of the public, extending the idea of conservation beyond the collaborating organizations, and helping to guard Hengchun Peninsula's natural environments.