

## Welcome to Okeanis!

Thank you for visiting our website. Please stay a while to explore our programs. I am confident you will enjoy the information we are presenting to you.

Okeanis was founded in 2006 by four dedicated and enthusiastic members of the Monterey Bay community in beautiful Central California. Although we are, and would like to remain, a small, grass-root organization, our dreams are big!

We realize there are many other worthwhile non-profit organizations out there and we strongly support their work and commitment to a better world. However, we still felt the need to add our own personal and heartfelt contribution and style to the growing community of people that care about the future of our planet and about the quality of information that is presented to you, the reader and to decision makers.

Okeanis has two main focuses:

- Inform conservation issues and management decisions through focused long-term monitoring and research programs;
- Train a new generation of scientists and managers in a cross-disciplinary way to provide them with the experience necessary to become leaders of ocean conservation in key areas of the world;

Too often, management decisions are based on short-term, ad-hoc studies sparked by an environmental emergency and by the availability of funding. However, there is generally little data collected before some impact occurred to really understand the changes in the system, making solutions more difficult to find.

At Okeanis, we believe in long-term comprehensive, cross-disciplinary efforts that involve the community and are participatory in nature. We believe in collecting a variety of data “before” problems arise to be able to better diagnose critical changes in the environment. We also believe in using indicator species as models to monitor long-term trends in the environment.

Collaborative efforts among members of the scientific community are essential to maximize the type of data being collected, and the hands-on participation of the people that live and use the local environment is a key to success.

I have traveled to many countries as part of my job as a researcher, and worked with communities from Africa, Central America, the Russian Far East and the Mediterranean. I have found that many “local” issues are mirrored in coastal communities around the world and that the ocean we all share as a resource is more interconnected than we ever thought it to be.

I found that it is hard for people to comprehend the vastness of our oceans and the intricate web of currents, tides, storms that ties many coastal communities together. Many of the largest ocean predators travel large distances between countries, unaware of political and geographical boundaries. Understanding how they are affected by human related activities can be very difficult without understanding the connections between peoples and oceans worldwide.

During my travels, I realized how much developing nations rely on western world scientists to tell them about their environment. Lack of training, resources and technical, hands-on skills are often the obstacle for many local scientists who would like to start detailed studies in their own country. We feel Okeanis can help.

We would like to provide technical training to scientists and community leaders in developing countries by giving them the opportunity to work with us side by side in Monterey Bay where the ocean provides an unparalleled hands-on training ground for marine science.

Help is also needed locally! Most of the students I have had the privilege of working with come from middle to upper class families that can afford paying for expensive internships to allow them to get technical training. I hardly ever encounter Latinos, African Americans or Native Americans taking advantage of internship opportunities. Okeanis would like to change this by providing funded internship opportunities to promising students that may not have the means to participate otherwise. We hope we will get your support to make this a reality.

In summary, we would like to guide, inspire, motivate and ultimately change attitudes and beliefs about the ocean and its relation to peoples and lands. We look forward to working with all that are interested in helping.

Best wishes

Daniela Maldini

President