

Community-based resource management pre-awareness training for communities in the Solomon Islands

In November 2012, the Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI) under its Communities and Coasts Program launched its “Strengthening Marine and Coastal Community Based Adaptive Resource Management Initiatives in Central Island Province, Solomon Islands” project. The project was designed to integrate existing provincial government activities in the delivery of community-based resource management (CBRM) information to as many communities as possible in the Central Province. The project is funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) under the Coral Triangle Initiative, with FSPI as a coordinating body. The Central Province government, through the Division of Fishery, is the key stakeholder in this project.

The project team consisted of one Project Officer (FSPI), two Fishery Officers (Central Province) and one Planning Officer (Central Province), covering twelve communities on small Gela Island over five days. It should be noted that of the twelve communities visited, only three were aware of CBRM.

Before the project was launched, the Central Province Planning Officer had already conducted an assessment of an additional two communities for other types of projects — the Dede community for a clinic and the Toa community for water supply — with funding from the Provincial Capacity Development Fund (PCDF). He had used the opportunity to distribute the documents related to fisheries management.

Local focal points were community chiefs, elders, leaders and teachers. It is anticipated that the information given to chiefs and community leaders will be delivered to community members in their own time. Where possible, the project or joint staff may conduct fuller awareness trainings in these communities if needed, and if resources allow.



The communities visited by the project team have experienced overfishing, dynamite fishing and night diving from nearby villages and islands, but enforcement is a challenge for the legal authorities. However, with the introduction of the Fishery Ordinance for Central Province (currently in draft form) by the Fishery Officer, community chiefs and leaders are keen to work together in managing their marine resources with provincial and national authorities, supported by the legal document that is awaiting national endorsement.

Chief Cecil Maneou of Belaga village reported: “Our communities have rich marine resources, and for the past decade our communities have been involved in fishery

According to Hugh Govan, Project Adviser, the major innovations of this approach include the:

- move away from investing all resources in facilitating CBRM in one or a few sites towards attempting to provide all 200+ communities of the Central Province with key fisheries information;
- leadership provided by the provincial fisheries and planning officer in making maximum use of scarce logistical resources to increase service delivery to communities;
- formation of cross-sectoral or integrated teams that allow for joint implementation;
- inventory by the project team of all available information resources to narrow down the essential information to be carried to communities; and
- provision of SPC Information Sheets, produced in collaboration with the Locally Managed Marine Area Network, which were the core materials used with communities as the essential topics were covered. These Information Sheets are a good guide to discussions and constitute rich reference materials when left with the community.

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development; for instance, with the Fishery Center at Salisapa (ice machine). However, we have noted that there has been a decline in marine resources in the past year, hence it is time for us to consider managing our marine resource for the benefit of future generations”.

According to the project team, the trip was a success because local communities perceived the benefits of this initial activity and had limited knowledge of fisheries management or the scientific aspect of it. However, it

was found that a few local communities already practice forms of marine resource management. For instance, the community of Toa has been imposing a ban (tabu) on their coral reefs for more than a year.

The Central Province government is fully supportive of this project and the approach it is taking, and will continue to share its resources to help mobilise the project team so that they can achieve the project’s objectives over the remaining year.

The SPC/LMMA Information Sheets for Fishing Communities were used as a guide to discussions.

