

munity training for women, organises meetings for rural women, conducts train the trainers workshops, and many other activities. Aliti has also been involved with Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA), a network of practitioners involved in assisting communities set up community-based marine resource management in Fiji.

Aliti hopes to continue the work started by Patricia Tuara and Lyn Lambeth on assessing the contribution and participation of men and women in fishing activities in the region, and highlighting ways of maximising participation by different sectors of the

communities. Aliti also hopes to document traditional marine resource knowledge and compile a basic inventory of the most used marine products (for food and other basic needs) by local communities. She believes that such information is useful for long-term planning and management projects for coastal resources. Depending on funding, Aliti would like to conduct research into marine resource dependence at the community level, identifying food changes, changing consumption and needs patterns.

Aliti will continue the section's tradition of training and capacity building.

Community-based fisheries management initiatives

By Aliti Vunisea, SPC Community Fisheries Officer

The Community Fisheries Section is working to facilitate the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs), or fisheries reserves, through its work with regional fisheries departments. The community-based initiative, which looks at offering technical advice and expertise in the establishment of management initiatives, has adopted a participatory approach to ensure community involvement. The approach is based on the Samoa community-based resource management initiative, which has been implemented in more than 70 villages in the country and which has been in place for the last six years. The section also considers models and approaches used elsewhere.

Other Pacific Island countries such as Fiji Islands, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, have adopted their own approaches to community-based management. Most of these efforts have been facilitated by non-governmental organisations, learning institutions and conservation agencies, and most have been small-scale, covering limited areas. SPC's Community Fisheries Section attempts to assist countries in approaching fisheries management from a broader perspective, with the fisheries departments taking the lead role in conservation attempts. The increasing concern for coastal fisheries and the need to retain or regenerate fisheries stocks to ensure a reliable food and economic source base, has prompted an emphasis on fisheries management at the community level.

Samoa

The Samoa community-based management programme has been a success, and the funding received from AusAID has allowed for the recruitment of extra staff and the acquisition of more facilities to carry out the project. The well-defined *matai* or chiefly system in Samoa has also been a contributing factor to the success of the project in this country.

American Samoa

A community-based management project was initiated in American Samoa in 2001. The local fisheries department has established a Community Management Section to take over management responsibilities. The initiative received considerable support in American Samoa in the beginning, but the first six-monthly project review indicates that many community members are finding it difficult to attend fisheries management committee meetings because of their own work commitments. The timing of community meetings has been difficult in American Samoa because many people have full-time jobs on top of other domestic duties.



SPC Community Fisheries Adviser with staff from the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in American Samoa

Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands community-based fisheries management project began in 2001 and has received considerable support from local communities. Workshops in the Marshall Islands have been conducted and the project will be reviewed in late 2002.



Women's group at a community-based participatory learning workshop in the Marshall Islands