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MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR THE PACIFIC ISLAND FISHERIES SECTOR

A BRIEF EXAMINATION OF OPTIONS
(Paper prepared by the Secretariat)

Management Training for the Pacific Island Fisheries Sector

A brief examination of options

Background

The Commission's initial involvement in management training stems from a recommendation made by RTMF 21 (1989) which resulted in the joint organisation, with FAO/UNDP Regional Fisheries Support Programme, of the 1990 Senior Fisheries Officers Organisational Management Workshop. The two week workshop was conducted by the Staff Development Group of the Queensland Department of Primary Industry and attended by 17 participants from 15 countries.

The course covered a range of management related topics under the general themes of strategic management, managing staff and systems, and managing change. Participant evaluation indicated strong support and interest in course content. Participants returned home with individual action plans for improvements to general management operations. By way of follow-up to the workshop, an in-country visiting programme was undertaken by one of the QPDI tutors during 1991. The report of these country visits noted :

It is evident from the organisations visited on this tour, that there is little use being made of modern management technologies such as strategic planning, programme management, systematic project management, computerised management information systems, programme budgeting, total quality management, strategic human resource management, or systematic programme evaluation.

The consultant further concluded:

The reasons why managers should be trained is so they can create changes in organisational functioning which will lead to more or better quality outputs with little or no increase in inputs. Training individuals in management without a plan or intention for there to be a change in organisational functioning is a waste of time and money. It is also ineffective to run management training for individual managers all from different systems, as the evidence shows that one individual manager cannot change the system by himself and often does not even try to.

Workshops such as the 1990 Organisational Management workshop can only raise the level of awareness of participants that there are better ways of functioning as managers and as organisations. To change or develop a system (and that is the object of training managers), it is necessary to arrange for a critical mass of managers from that system to have a common experience, so that they can all work together in the development of the organisational culture.

In considering the development of management training, RTMF 24 recommended that the SPC continue to provide assistance in the implementation of appropriate management training. In support of this recommendation, the SPC Coastal Fisheries Programme has undertaken widespread consultation as to the possible mechanisms whereby this might be satisfied. This paper discusses existing institutional options for management training within the region and possible management projects for implementation by SPC.

Existing opportunities in Management Training

Within the region, there are a range of options for individuals or departments wishing to undertake formal management training, including certificate, diploma, and degree programmes offered through universities and technical schools. Courses are also offered on a less formal basis through national training bodies such as the administrative college of PNG and the Fiji National Training Council (FNTC). Those countries included in the USP network also have the option to undertake management studies through the extension services programme to both certificate and diploma level.

Outside the immediate region, management training opportunities are considerable. Almost all multi-disciplinary tertiary institutions offer management level qualifications.

For fisheries administrations prioritising management training for senior personnel, there are obviously numerous options which may be pursued, although many of these do require a commitment to periods of study which in many cases will involve overseas travel.

Whilst it would be desirable for senior managers from Pacific fisheries administrations to complete a management training programme, at least to diploma level, the existing options primarily pertain to the training and education of individuals within a department and will not serve to create the 'common experience' suggested by the QDPI management consultant as necessary to promote change within an organisational culture. The opportunity for a group of managers from a single department, division, or corporation to work together on management development in a training environment does not appear to be readily available to Pacific managers.

Alternatives to Institutional Management Training

One of the most recent additions to the range of management programmes on offer has been the development of 'total quality management' (TQM) training programmes. The concept of Total Quality Management evolved in post-war Japan and can be generally defined as a commitment to quality delivery of services and products by everyone in an organisation - quality achieved by teamwork and a process of continuous improvement. TQM means dedication to being the best, to delivering high quality services which meet or exceed the expectations of customers. Based on continuous learning, TQM has proved attractive to both public and private sector managers as it does not necessarily involve protracted staff training.

An introduction to the TQM programme is available through a range of short course programmes which can be prepared for specific target groups. For example, hotel management in several large hotel chains have switched to TQM, with workshops being run for management teams for each individual hotel. Divisions of Government departments, marketing authorities, regional and city councils have also adopted TQM programmes through management staff workshops.

At the more formal end of the scale, a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) degree based on 'action learning' (learning on the job) can be undertaken through Australian Institutions based on 40% of a managers working time over an 18 month period. Interestingly, the Management and Administration Department of USP is currently working towards the introduction of a similar programme.

Sector Specific Programmes in Management Training

Much of the content of modern management training relates to the principles and practices of management as a science. On graduation or completion of a short course or workshop, management students then apply their knowledge to practical situations specific to the sector or industry in which they are employed.

There is an obvious advantage to a training process which targets a specific sector and includes the 'case study' application of sector specific problems. In this manner, a team of managers from a particular department, organisation, or sector can work together and the consideration of appropriate case, or real problems which occur within the organisation, becomes a part of the training process.

Given the knowledge that management training for individuals is readily available through established institutions within the region, the SPC Fisheries Training Section has limited the extent of its consideration of management training to the possible development of training opportunities for fisheries specific programmes centering on the development of management processes in individual departments or organisations.

Two options are outlined for consideration:

*** In-country workshops**

The possibility of organising a management training 'roadshow', visiting departments for short (one to two week) workshops, has been widely discussed with fisheries administrations and management trainers from a number of institutions. Comments from fisheries personnel have suggested such a workshop programme should include the following:

- strategic management systems;
- problem-solving specific to the operation of the particular department;
- total quality management techniques;
- project management;
- HRD planning;
- department management development plans;

It was also noted that an in-country workshop programme should include a local tutor or organiser and incorporate a follow up and evaluation component. In order to ensure that departments could continue to operate simultaneous with the workshops (and to allow for open discussion regarding superiors), the following general structure has been suggested:

session one	- (one to three days)	senior managers
session two	- (one to three days)	middle managers
session three	- (one to three days)	all management

The fisheries training section has had preliminary meetings with staff from USP's Management and Administration Department and Institute of Social and Administrative Studies (ISAS) as to their possible consultative input into a fisheries workshop programme. With a substantial history in the delivery of management training to the region, it is suggested that USP would be the most appropriate source of resource people for a workshop programme. As the proposed workshop time is brief, content will have to be carefully considered and it may be appropriate to limit subject matter or lengthen the timeframe according to the needs of the departments concerned.

It is possibly worthwhile to consider a pilot project for this type of workshop, covering perhaps five countries during a 12 month period. Evaluation of the workshops by a regional forum would then facilitate the further development of the programme.

*** Train the trainer workshop**

A regional (or sub-regional) workshop programme to train nominated individuals in management training principles and methodology could also be considered. This would involve a similar content to the 1990 workshop but with a greater emphasis on participants as teachers of management. An in-country follow up programme, similar to that offered by the 'roadshow' would be incorporated, with the trained staff member (assisted by a consultant tutor) offering management development workshops to fellow staff.

Conclusion

There is a wide range of management training currently available in the region, particularly for those countries with access to the USP system.

New developments during the past 10-20 years in the science of management have resulted in the evolution of management concepts which are not yet common in the region. These are primarily based on a group approach to management development and commitment to the delivery of quality services.

Management training does not necessarily involve study outside of the work-place and short workshop programmes have been used successfully in many situations to improve management systems based on the use of 'real' situations.

If it is established as appropriate to do so, a workshop programme of this nature, specific to management development in fisheries administrations and organisations, could be organised by SPC in association with the University of the South Pacific or other appropriate consultants.