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**FACILITATED COMMUNITY ACTION PROCESS – A STRUCTURED EXTENSION
APPROACH TO GENERATE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY BASED ACTION IN
RELATION TO COASTAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

by

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Introduction

Post World War II extension has shown a clear evolutionary path from a top down supply driven approach to the so-called bottom up demand extension system. It fair to say that much of the extension activity in fisheries in the Pacific has been, and still is, largely input based relying on the transfer of technical solutions to produce nationally determined goals of development. In general the input based method can be seen as a series of short term technical inputs often project based, and aid funded with definable solutions and technically measurable results. Most have been unsustainable and many of the existing fisheries extension services have been undertaking the same extension processes for many years ie providing training in smoking fish, drying beche-de-mer, providing net mending training, introducing new fishing methods, outboard maintenance courses etc. These systems rely on routine delivery of well established extension activities and indeed over the past 20 years the delivery has been considerably refined. However, this process fails the basic market tests of client identification and discrimination, and product demand or, in more relevant extension terms, who are they, do they have the need and the want for the product being presented.

Progress from the input approach came about through the adoption of a process of client identification by selecting common interest groups within the target community. This process at least brought individuals or families of like interest together and the extension message could be more focussed. It also encouraged a more group or participatory approach in that problems were identified by the group and the extension service provided the solution. The Training and Visit (T & V) system has this type of approach and certainly results appear to be better than the input method but the solutions to commonly identified problems are still provided by the extension service. This method is also not sustainable in that the capacity of the participants to identify the problem is acknowledged but their capacity to solve the problem is not, so in essence the development self help is hindered. The T & V system thus fails the ownership test ie the participants do own the problem but not the solution.

Current bottom-up extension philosophy concentrates on establishing a system that is responsive to community demand and is able to facilitate a solution. In this process the client is assisted in the identification of the problem and the extension service facilitates the client in arriving at their own solutions. The solution may require technical input but the problems and the solutions are demanded not imposed.

Application to Marine Resources Conservation

A management and conservation program can take two basic forms. The first is an imposed solution with fishing being restricted and environmentally damaging activities being mitigated through the adoption and enforcement of National Legislation. Such an approach is the norm but is only successful where significant resources can be directed towards enforcement. This is clearly top-down approach ie an imposed solution is not demanded/owned by the communities and would have poor long term sustainability if enforcement were stopped or poorly funded.

The second is for communities to demand rights to their own marine resources and to implement management within appropriate sustainability criteria. The difficulty is in establishing a process that leads to such, outcome and that is sustainable by the community and acceptable to government.

Extension Process.

Whilst the concept of a bottom up demand led approach has many obvious benefits it nevertheless presents significant problems for a government or NGOs attempting to institutionalise such an approach. As the process should take place on a **cooperative** basis and progress at a rate and style determined by the participants it presents challenges to ensure that an outcome is achieved within realistic time and resource constraints. There are thus two important design issues that face the extension system. Firstly, how to structure a process that guides but doesn't subsume the participants feelings of ownership and control and secondly, how can a service be demanded if there is poor knowledge of its existence, benefits or need for it?

In considering these two issues I have found it useful to focus on the desirable outcomes and work backwards from this point. In the Samoan case the desirable outcome was to have a mobilised and motivated community that had identified the major lagoonal environmental issues/problems facing it and had implemented measures to remediate or mitigate/solve these. In essence the process was a community planning exercise. To achieve the desirable outcomes an extension process that in essence facilitated a community planning exercise needed to be developed.

A community planning exercise has many similarities to the Goal-oriented Project Planning or ZOPP¹(Zielorientierte Projekt Planung) used by the German Development Agency as a technique for involving communities in project design. Aspects of the ZOPP ie Problem and Objective Analysis are used as the proforma for the Facilitated Community Action Process (FCAP). Essentially the Problem Analysis involves the construction of a problem tree which has several levels of problems ie a hierarchal order, this problem tree is then transformed to an Objective Analysis or in the case of the FCAP a Solution Tree which produces a hierarchy of solutions. This modified technique has application in many different extension and management situations and a full account of the process can be found in Wilson (1995) and a descriptive account of its use in the Samoan Extension Project in King and Faasili (1997).

The Community - Its Awareness of the Problem.

An extension system, to be effective as a facilitative process, must be designed with a clear understanding of the communities' current awareness of the problem. There are several extension techniques that have been primarily developed for agricultural extension that can be applied to the fisheries or coastal management problem. Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) is one such technique which is really just a first pass at assessing community and technical issues that appear to be hindering progress or bringing about the change considered desirable. A more structured community awareness program can then be established on the basis of the RRA.

The FCAP provides a mechanism for communities to determine, their lagoonal conservation and fisheries management strategies, the implementation process and methodology, and the input from government. To enable communities to fully utilise this process the community needs to be informed, aware and motivated. The level of awareness in relation to the environment and conservation will vary on a case by case basis. Awareness of the types of conservation steps that need to be taken and their method of implementation, monitoring and enforcement are generally poorly understood. If the FCAP is to empower the community to describe and implement conservation and fisheries management then awareness and information generators need to be put in place to raise community understanding and capacity.

Awareness Generators

The generation of awareness should take place at a number of levels within a community and these are shown below in Figure 1.

¹ German Agency for Technical Co-operation (1987). ZOPP: An introduction to the Method. Frankfurt am Main.

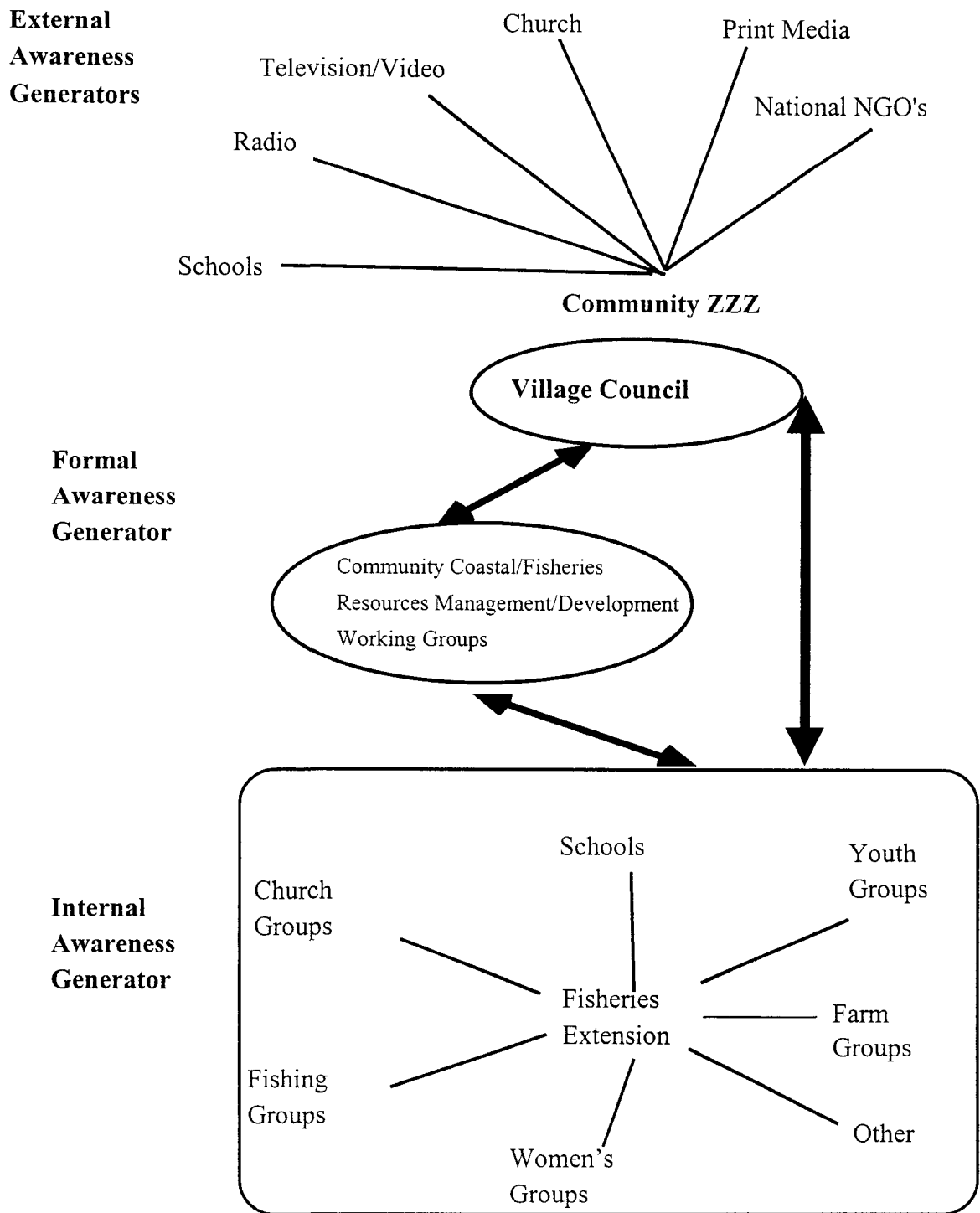


Figure 1 Methods for developing community awareness generators

Community empowerment

In discussing community involvement, participation is often used to describe the envisaged community's role. However, there are several different levels of participation ranging from being part of a consultative process to one where the community controls and manages the process and outcomes. The different levels of participation are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

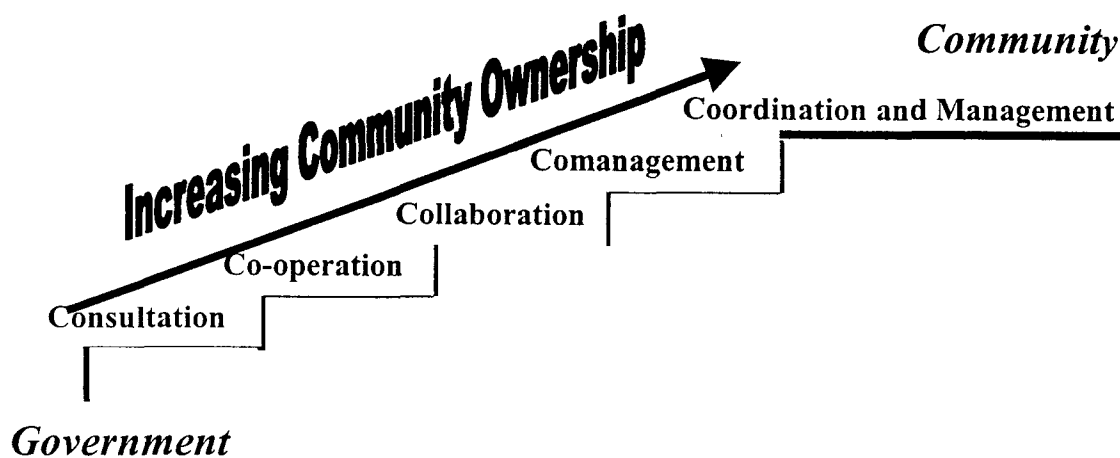


Figure 2 Levels of community empowerment

Community Action - A Question of Ownership

Increasing the level of community participation empowers communities due to the shift of ownership and the associated responsibility and accountability. An extension process that seeks to bring about community based management, conservation or development must ensure that ownership remains or is effectively and explicitly transferred to the community. In the jargon of human management this process is often termed shifting the monkey. The monkey on the shoulder (Figure 3) symbolises who carries the burden of responsibility and accountability for the issue, problem or project.



Figure 3 Ensuring the extension process leaves the responsibility and accountability with the community.

Facilitated Community Action Process

The proposed extension system relies on the capacity of communities to identify problems (Figure 5) their consequential impacts (Figure 6) and solutions (Figure 7). The extension system's role is thus to facilitate a community action process that produces a Marine Resource Management and Development Plan. As the approach is a whole of community one it is vital that groups representing the community be formed to adequately reflect the community's will. The process of establishing groups will vary depending on the cultural setting. The full process is presented in Figure 4 below.

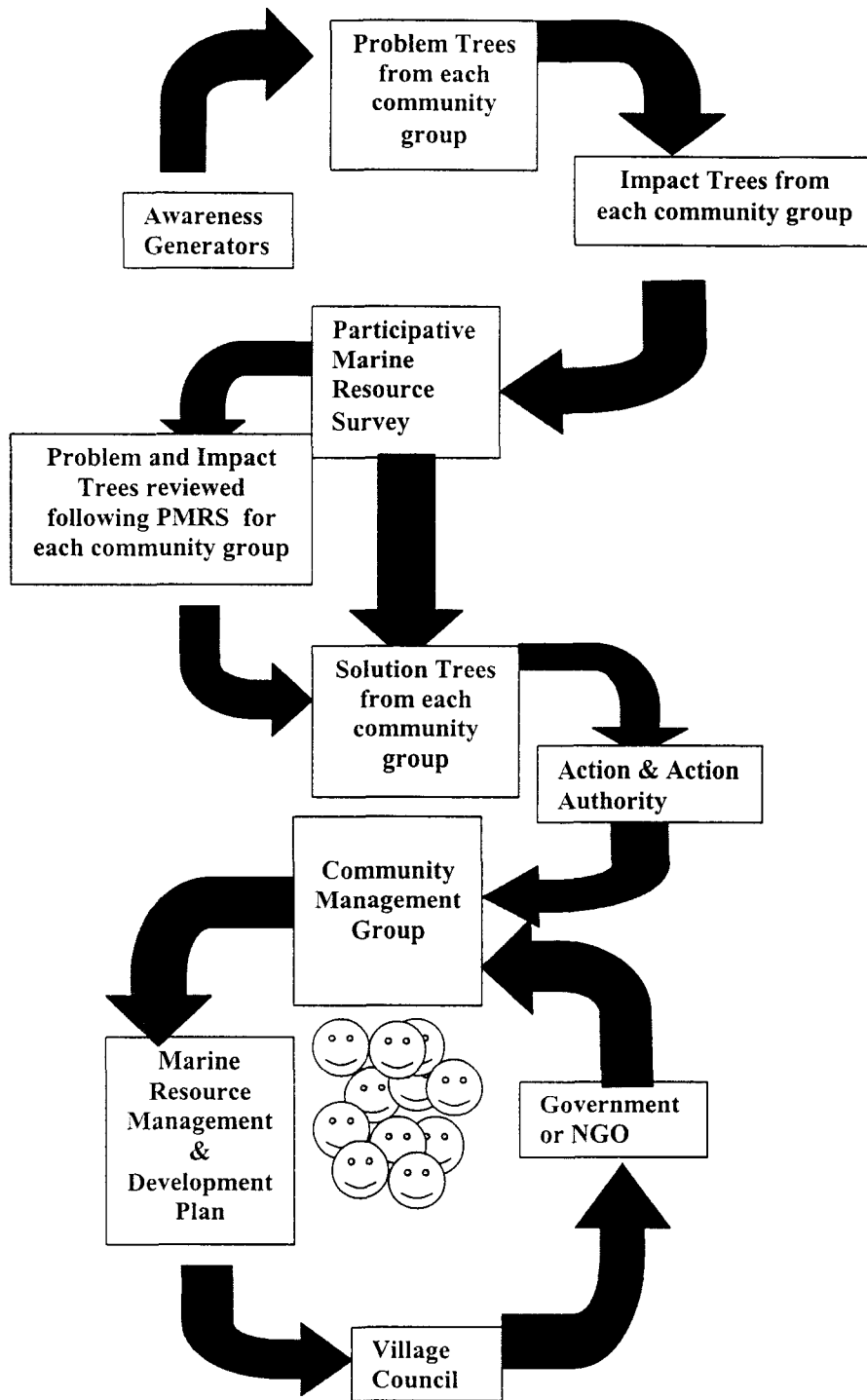


Figure 4 The Facilitated Community Action Process

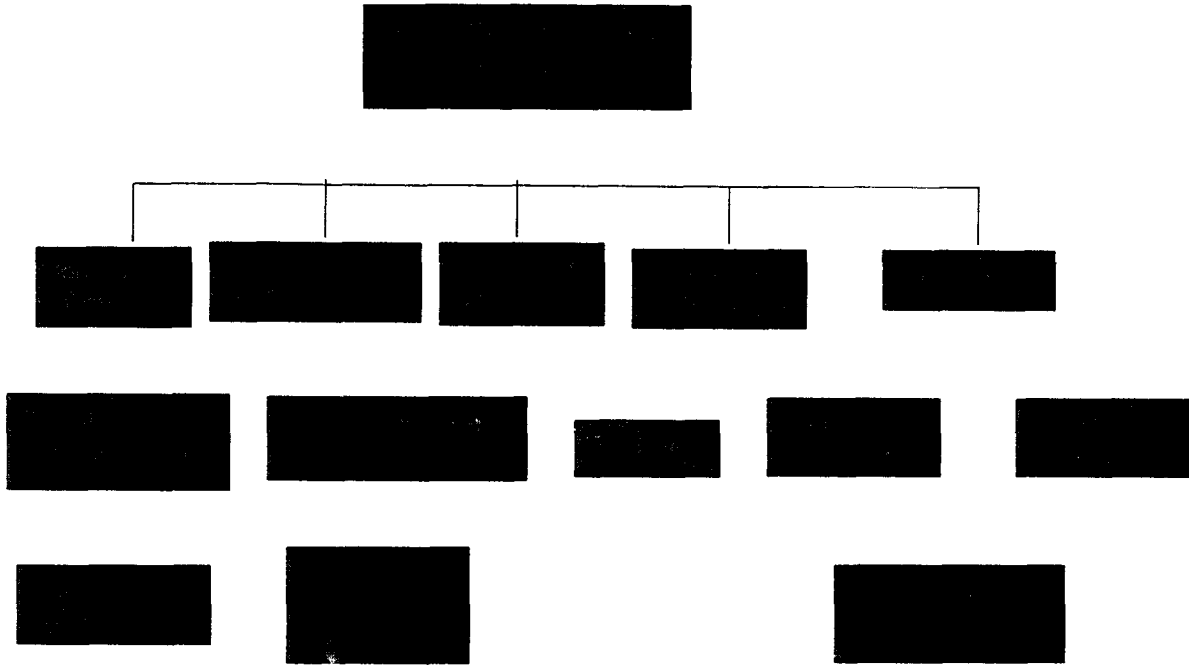


Figure 5 A typical community established problem tree.

Impact Assessment

Perhaps the most important aspect of the initial group meetings is the impact assessment aspect. This stage establishes the short-term effects and the longer-term consequences of the identified problems on the community. It is important in this process to establish the moral basis for the need for change. Inter and intra generational equity issues, public health and well being as well as education, can be pursued by the facilitator. A typical Impact Assessment is provided below (Figure 6)

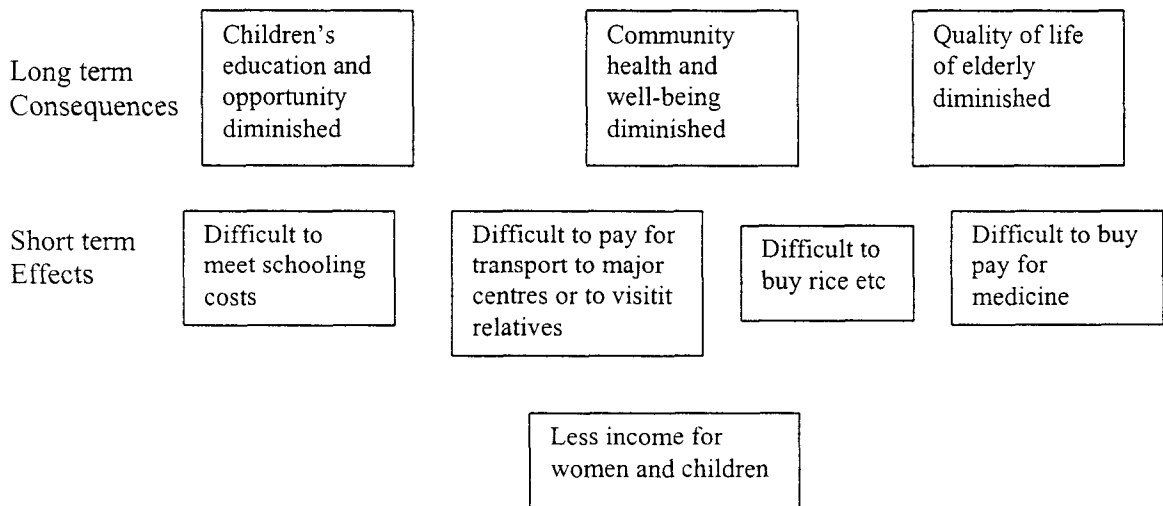


Figure 6 A typical impact assessment tree.

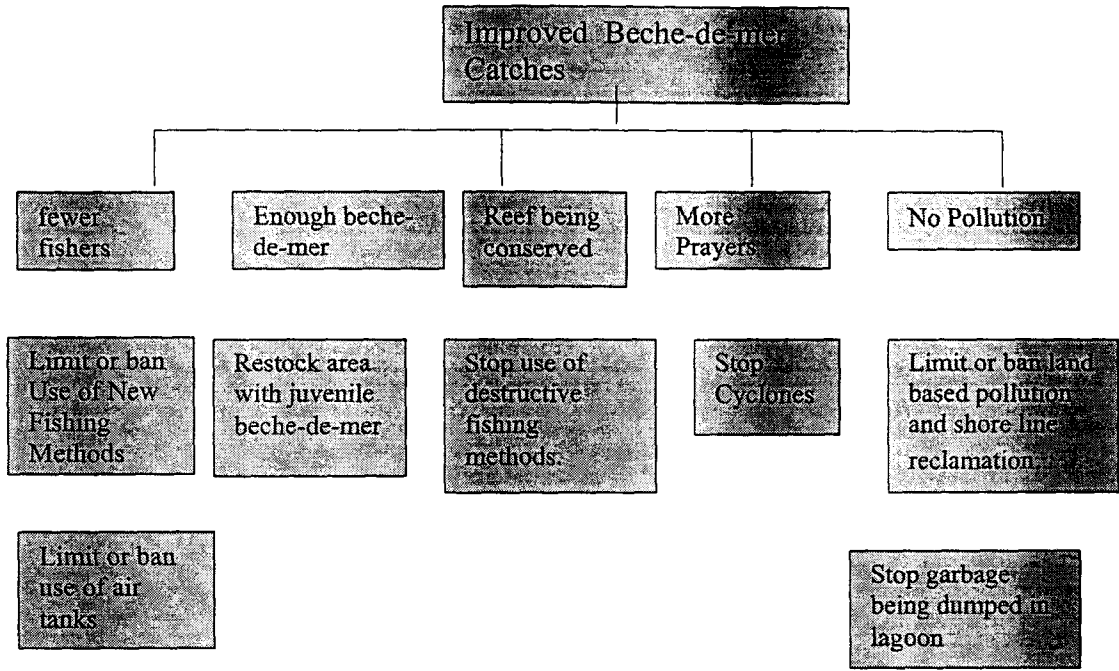


Figure 7 A typical community established solution tree.

Actions and Responsibility

Once the remedies have been established through the amalgamation of the groups problem, impact and solution trees the Community Advisory Committee allocates the responsibility for the action and the implementing authority.

Action			
Action Nominee	Village Council will make a rule to banning the use of new and or destructive fishing methods establish appropriate punishment	Extension officer to obtain consent	Pastors will lead more prayers by the community

Figure 8 The action outcomes of the FCAP identifying the specific actions and the responsible authority

Community Marine Resource Management and Development Plan

The categories of information required to prepare a community based Marine Resource Management and Development Plan are;

- **Historical Trends**
Information on historical trends in relation to
 - habitat
 - fish catches and fish catches per unit of effort
 - fisher numbers
- **Resource Audit**
An assessment of the current status (audit) of the lagoonal habitat and fisheries resources
- **Alternative Resources**
An assessment of other available (to the community in question) fisheries resources that have potential for development.
- **Traditional Management**
A description of traditional management measures formerly used by the community. Information of these types should be collected under specific headings such as
 - basis or purpose of traditional management rule
 - description of rule or method used
 - enforcement, how was it enforced, what were the penalties for breaking the rule?
 - currency
 - Does the rule still exist, is it enforced, if not why not?
 - or
 - When was the rule abandoned and why?
- **Current Management**
What community rules currently exist in relation to fishing, the marine and coastal environment?
Information of these types should be collected under specific headings such as;
 - basis or purpose of the community rule?
 - description of rule or method used and its start-up date
 - compliance,
 - is the rule being obeyed?
 - what are the measures taken to enforce the rule?
 - have their been any people caught and penalised?
 - currency
 - is the rule working?
- **National Management and Development Policy**
What is the current national policy on the Marine Environment ?
What additional fisheries management regulations exist?
What is government policy on fisheries development
- **Current Resource and Habitat Problems**
What are the current problems in the lagoon and with fish catches and what effect have these had on the community?
- **Impacts on the community of the identified problems**
What are the short term effects and the long term consequences?

- Solutions to Resource and Habitat Problems
What are the solutions and the actions required to resolve these problems?
- Fisheries Conservation Methods
What methods will be used at a community level to manage lagoonal fisheries and how will they be made to work?
- Government Services
What services will fisheries and other government agencies provide to assist the community in relation to resolving its problems with regards to the lagoonal environment and fisheries?

Community Action

A **whole** of community approach is required and the FCAP needs to establish the following;

- Awareness
- Moral Commitment
- Perceived Benefits ie Incentive
 - Societal
 - Financial
- Marine Resource Management and Development Plan owned by the community

Sustainable Community Action

The success of a community based management and development plan is gauged not by its adoption but rather the degree of community acceptance and adherence. Thus the sustainability will be contingent upon;

Continued Awareness

Continued Moral Commitment

Evident Benefits ie continuing incentive

- Societal
 - Quality environment
 - lagoons the “soul” of many Pacific Communities
 - Community strengthening/pride/cohesion
- Financial
 - alternative income sources
 - new areas/fisheries
 - aquaculture
 - ecotourism
 - other business opportunities

Assurance of food security

- Availability of proximal and accessible alternative food sources be they
 - Land based or
 - Sea based

Comparison of the effectiveness and cost of the three extension approaches

Community based management offers a real opportunity for Pacific Island Nations to address conservation issues in inshore areas and through this achieve sustainable use goals. A comparison of the relative merits of the three extension approaches is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1 Three Extension Types and their comparative benefits to Government.



	Supply	Available	Demand
Problem Identification.	Govt	Govt/Community	Community
Cause Identification.	Govt	Govt/Community	Community
Solution Identification.	Govt	Govt	Community
Solution Identification Cost	Low	Med	High
Action Program cost	High	Med	Low
Compliance	Low	Med	High
Enforcement Cost	V. High	High	None
Sustainability	Poor	Med	Excellent

Does FCAP work?

King et al (1998) have reported on the results todate of the Samoan Extension Program

A more detailed summary of the conservation measures adopted are presented below (table 2) and relate to the 42 months in which the AusAID funded project has been running although the FCAP has only been operational for 30 months.

Has community based management been sustainable

As many of the Community management plans have only been operational for less than 18 months it is not possible to assess the long-term sustainability of the plans. Provision is made within the management plans for a review of progress six months after adoption. The results of the reviews todate have been very positive although some villages (< 25%) have not maintained a high level of compliance (>75%) with their conservation measures. Interestingly non compliance was often blamed on intra community disputes.

Table 2 Community based management arrangements in the Samoan Fisheries Extension Project.

	Number	%
Community Contacts	70	
Communities who withdrew from the Process	17 ²	
Villages Proceeding to a Management Plan	53	
<u>Community Conservation Measures</u>		
Community MPAs		96
Prohibited use of dynamite and bleach		96
Prohibited use of derrus root (poison)		96
Adopted Min Size Limits		41
Adopted Mesh Size Limits		76
Prohibited use of use of torches for spearing		18
Prohibited use of coral smashing		82
Prohibited taking of beach sand		12
Prohibited sale for export of beche-de-mer		39
Prohibited sale for export of coral		8
Protected mangroves		48
Prohibited dumping of rubbish		74

Key Extension Issues

The FCAP method provides a community action and implementation plan. The challenge facing the extension designer are how to;

- assess the capacity of the communities to cooperate
- involve all members of a community or at least their representatives as participants whilst still staying within the established social hierachy
- facilitate this process at a community level within cultural requirements/rules ie develop awareness
- maintain effective performance from extension personell and yet not be seen by the community as taking over the planning exercise
- establish community commitment to the planning process ie develop motivation
- assist community acceptance of the need for and implementation of actions ie community mobilisation
- identify the front end needs and support required to assist the process and sustain the outcomes
- ensure government or NGO support meets community expectations in terms of timeliness, quality and quantity of agreed inputs.
- ensure government is committed to community empowerment ie the bureaucracy and politicians are prepared to let go the reins of legislative power.
- ensure government provides legislative validity and support for community action.

² The FCAP is a demand based approach and communities decide if they want to continue, delay or withdraw from the process. This is an essential right that any owner of the process must have.

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