



Enhancing fishery officers' communications skills

From left to right: Fisheries officers Joseph Teuea and Taatie Eria, from Kiribati, and Amanda Le'ota and Siosi Matanga from Tonga. (image: Céline Muron, SPC)

In December 2019, the Pacific Community (SPC) organised an attachment training programme aimed at reinforcing the strategic communication and information skills of Pacific Island fisheries officers. Five fisheries officers from Tuvalu, Kiribati and Tonga took part in this two-week workshop, learning about and exchanging ideas on how to build and implement an efficient, culturally adequate communication plan, and how to design information tools that address fisheries management issues.

For the vast majority of Pacific Island communities, the lack of access to information tailored to their needs is a barrier to their engagement and participation in decision-making, including decisions related to their marine resources. To address this challenge, SPC is implementing communication, information and outreach activities that target coastal communities through its Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems (FAME) Division. These activities are part of the Coastal Fisheries Governance Project¹ and the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) Programme², and are delivered through national governments and relevant local networks and partners.

Reinforcing local capacity is part of the challenge. For the five Pacific Island fisheries officers – Eria Taatie and Joseph Teuea from Kiribati; Amanda Le'ota and Siosi Matanga from Tonga; and Matelina Stuart from Tuvalu – the opportunity to learn innovative approaches and practices during four participatory sessions was provided by SPC's information and communications officers.

Session 1: Assessing the context and analysing the situation

The objective of this session was to analyse the current strategic communications and approaches used in trainees' respective countries, and discuss their comparative strengths and weaknesses. All trainees considered radio programmes and community visits as successful approaches to trigger changes in community behaviour, even if radio may be expensive in some places. Social media (such as Facebook) were also recognised as strong tools to reach coastal communities, but these are not fully used by fisheries authorities in the region.

Session 2: Building social and behavioural change communication

Toky Rasoloarimanana, FAME Communications Officer, used fisheries issues as a way to explain the theory of social

¹ The Coastal Fisheries Governance Project aims to strengthen governance structures and processes for the effective management of coastal fisheries and aquaculture, at the national and subnational level. It focuses specifically on supporting Pacific Island countries and territories in developing legislation and policies, and improving monitoring, control, surveillance and enforcement. This project is funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

² Funded by the European Union and the Government of Sweden, the EUR 45 million PEUMP programme promotes sustainable management and sound ocean governance for food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and the conservation of marine biodiversity. It follows a comprehensive approach, by integrating issues related oceanic fisheries, coastal fisheries, community development, marine conservation and capacity building under one single regional action.

and behavioural change communication (SBCC). SBCC is the interactive process of any intervention that involves individuals, groups or community members who are developing communication strategies to promote positive behaviours that are appropriate to their settings.³ Practical exercises allowed trainees to start working on an SBCC strategy for fisheries management in their country.



Source: Adapted from Ryan Long - <https://ryanlonglicsw.com/behavioral-coachingpersonal-training/>

Why do we need to think “change”?

Coastal marine resources are declining everywhere, and the main reasons for this decline include overfishing, the use of destructive fishing methods (e.g. dynamite, chemicals and poisons) and environmental disturbances, which are all human caused. Establishing regulations to prevent these destructive practices may not be efficient if resource users do not fully understand the cause and effect of their actions. SBCC can be used to shift current ways of thinking and trigger personal behaviour changes that result in positive effects.

Session 3: Social media and video production training

Evlyn Many, the Information and Communications Officer for SPC’s Public Health Division, conducted a session on best practices for social media, including defining content types and strategies, and using infographics, captions, hashtags, stories, and user-generated content. Practical exercises included the production of a short interview video for social media.

Session 4: Recording for radio programmes and videos

In this final session, fisheries officers were trained in voice recording. This session included tips on how to use the tone of the voice while speaking on radio awareness programmes.



Matelina Stuart recording the Tuvaluan version of two animated videos of SPC series “Fisher’s Tales”. (image: Céline Muron, SPC)

As a practical exercise, the recording of a voice-over in a local language for two animated videos of the series “Fisher’s Tales” was conducted in a studio under the supervision of a sound engineer.

The attachment training programme also provided an opportunity to develop information and awareness-raising tools that are in line with the communications strategy drafted during the workshop.

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³ Adapted from Wikipedia : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_and_behavior_change_communication