

“Keep fishing sustainably”: Innovative communication methods for engaging communities of Wallis and Futuna

Besides disseminating information, many awareness campaigns aim to permanently change practices and behaviour. Changing norms can only be achieved with local communities, often by jointly developing systems and key messaging. As new information and communication technology develops quickly, so do the tactics needed to engage communities, which requires innovation.

Participatory approaches and innovation

“The Sea, our Source of Life” campaign on Wallis and Futuna clearly illustrates this process. A 2020 coastal fisheries management review identified the need to strengthen ties between fisheries departments and fishers, and set up a unified information platform as prerequisites for sustainably managing coastal marine resources.

In 2021, the Wallis and Futuna Agricultural, Fisheries and Forestry Services Department (DSA) built Phase 1 of an awareness campaign on sustainable fisheries with support from the Pacific Community (SPC). The campaign is funded by the European Union through PROTEGE (Pacific Territories Regional Project for Sustainable Ecosystem Management) and the New Zealand Aid Programme through SPC’s Fisheries, Aquaculture and Marine Ecosystems Division. The campaign aims to be unequivocally focused on fishers and sea users.

Symbols and messaging

The campaign’s information kit has been translated into local languages and already contains two animated TV clips that began broadcasting August 2021. In addition, 10 exhibition panels and an anthology of poems showcase the testimony of elders or display photographs of communities. During production, DSA sounded out community representatives for their approval of the logos, symbols and messages. Phase 1 aimed at rallying communities around sea and fisheries culture.

A video challenge to trigger changes to local behaviors

The campaign introduced innovation in the form of a Facebook video challenge, using digital media and images, which ran from September to November 2021. The theme was



Contestant #6 Aleta and Granny Falai.
<https://www.facebook.com/pecheurswf/videos/875579923143073/>

“Keep Fishing Sustainably” and the objective to engage civil society and fishers through entertaining videos. All nine contest judges, consisting of Wallis and Futuna fisheries management stakeholders, shared short recorded testimonies explaining the issues involved in sustainable fisheries as well as the contest’s rules. DSA’s teaser video alone garnered nearly 25,000 views and 2000 positive comments on the campaign’s Facebook page.

Campaign ambassadors

Within two months, there was a tremendous response, with 17 highly varied videos submitted by fisher associations, schoolchildren and teachers. The messages expressed in their videos were replete with colour, ideas, poetry and even a touch of humour. People became actively involved in effecting change, bearing messages from their island territory in support of sustainable fisheries.



Contestant #16 - Erwan Taufana, a spearfisher
<https://www.facebook.com/pecheurswf/videos/1254682351622104>



Contestant#5 - Odette Manufekai and Manuella Tuhimutu
<https://www.facebook.com/pecheurswf/videos/306105218014514/>

“Today, needs have changed as lifestyles on our islands have moved on [...] which is why we must remember that nothing lasts forever, and we need to learn how to fish sustainably so that we can continue living off our marine resources.” Aleta and Granny Falai spoke about changing lifestyles while Odette Manufekai and Manuella Tuhimutu danced on the seashore to celebrate sustainable practices. “Let our little fishes live!” concluded the budding fisherwomen. Meanwhile, spearfisher Erwan Tufana, urged viewers not to fish too often at night.

Along with roundtable meetings and consultations with fishers, these messages will form the basis for building the awareness campaign’s second phase scheduled for 2022.

While the awareness campaign’s ultimate aim is to have a genuine impact on behaviour, the activity on Wallis and Futuna showed that this original awareness messaging format produced by the local community and stakeholders was successful because it earned people’s trust and led to concerted action with the communities. The activity was also in line with socially and environmentally responsible principles, as it involved local communities in the Pacific Community’s communication and awareness exercises.

For more information

Visit “The Sea, our Source of Life” campaign’s information material

https://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/FAME/Collection/Campagne_WF_Te_Tai

Watch the winning video of the “Keep fishing sustainably” contest produced by Maëlann and Chloé Liufau Telesia Tiniloa

<https://www.facebook.com/pecheurswf/videos/342253031008516/>

Watch the artistic video of the “Keep fishing sustainably” contest made by Lano Alofiva school’s Year-8 pupils

<https://www.facebook.com/pecheurswf/videos/441966224101720/>

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