

Project Leader: Kartik Sameer Madiraju
Jessica Jennifer Cohen Foundation Grant Awardee 2014
Project Interim Report I

Introduction

As per the grant proposal, in light of the precarious situation in which island nations find themselves with respect to climate change and biodiversity loss, not to mention loss of culturally significant ecosystems, this project aims to empower both non-governmental and governmental actors with the skills to: engage communities in discussions to adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts; protect and manage key resources such as fisheries; and negotiate agreements internally for consensus building, bilaterally and multilaterally for external agreements.

In this report I detail key objectives that have been fulfilled while providing detailed updates on pending objectives.

Objectives

1. To provide training in negotiation, conflict resolution and effective communication to Palau Conservation Society (PCS) staff and key target groups as jointly identified by Project Leader and PCS. Training takes the form of 2-3 day workshops that involve theory, case study preparation, mock negotiations, debriefs of exercises, and takeaway tools and reading materials (books, flashcards, notepads, worksheets)
2. To develop a community engagement strategy in order to empower communities to start and continue productive dialogue on key sensitive issues (climate change, fisheries, water quality, etc.)
3. To network through PCS partners and affiliates with the goal of providing more negotiation training to the Palauan Government and its environmental agencies (Office of Environmental Response Coordination, etc.)

Updates

Objective 1

Upon my arrival to Palau, I established contact with my colleague and direct supervisor, Ms Umai Basilius, Policy and Planning Coordinator at PCS. We identified that workshops in negotiation and effective communication that focused on skills to build consensus, have difficult conversations about sensitive issues, and measure outcomes of projects and agreements objectively, were of utmost importance to PCS staff and its affiliates. I was notified that these trainings would also meet PCS interests in the long-term, with respect to upcoming commitments and meetings

under the Convention on Bio-Diversity (CBD). Given that these workshops and trainings were a high-priority, we decided to provide training first to the Site Managers of Protected Area Networks, Palau's system of ecological preserves.

These workshops are scheduled and confirmed for nearly 20 participants, including the Environmental Planner for all of Palau, Ms Charlene Mersai. They will take place February 17th, 18th, and 19th.

The structure of each workshop is as follows:

Negotiation

- An introduction to Insight Collaborative and the notion of 'Substance-Relationship Tension'
- Two exercises (the 'Arm Exercise' and the 'Pricing Exercise') which are interactive and participatory, conducted to raise awareness about mindsets, and how those mindsets lead parties to various actions and results.
- The Good Outcomes Lecture—in which we define negotiation and provide a seven-element tool to measuring success in a negotiation objectively.
- Case Study—we use a case prepared by Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation as an application of the theory. Two sides are given each half of the case, and prepare for a mock negotiation facilitated by the trainer
- Mock Negotiation and Debrief—participants apply knowledge in one-on-one negotiations using the case material, followed by an interactive debrief discussion given by the trainer
- Advice on Conduct—trainer gives advice and strategic tools (3 Buckets, 4 P's of Meeting Design, Circle of Value) to conduct negotiations and how to deal with difficult tactics in negotiations
- If time permits, we apply all knowledge to a multiparty negotiation, involving six stakeholders with various interests.
- Closing remarks

Effective Communication

- An introduction to the 'Internal Voice' with exercise on distinguishing between external discussions, and internal voice that reveals true perceptions and emotions
- Use of the Two-Column Tool to describe a personal difficult conversation—each participant will fill in the worksheet with a conversation they recently had, along with their feelings and thoughts in a separate column.
- Lecture: 'The What Happened? Conversation'—we teach participants to engage in Three Shifts—from certainty to curiosity, from blame to contribution and from impact to intent. These mindset shifts allow participants to engage a difficult situation productively, steering away from communication that is emotional and one-sided, without abandoning talk of strong feelings and concerns that are important to the dialogue.

- Case Study—using a case prepared by Harvard Law School, we divide the group into two sides and the trainer facilitates preparation for the difficult conversation in each side separately.
- Mock Communication—participants apply the three shifts to have the conversation one-on-one, and then the trainer debriefs on what worked well, and what could be done differently
- We end with a Hot Buttons exercise, where we encourage participants to apply the Inquiry vs Advocacy tool (a tool where participants are asked to ask more questions and demonstrate acknowledgment of the other side's perceptions, rather than advocate their position). The Hot Buttons exercise places participants in groups of three, where they are asked to role-play around sensitive issues (climate change, war, religion, etc.). This exercise helps participants develop their skill of remaining curious about the other side's feelings and perceptions.
- Final Remarks

Objective 2

Through discussions with Ms Basilius, I have designed and developed a community engagement strategy that is comprehensive and cross-applicable to any sensitive issue. Fisheries management is one of the most culturally and socio-politically relevant issue in Palau, and overfishing has brought environmental concerns to the forefront. Resulting decisions to protect fisheries can have impacts on a wide range of stakeholders, and communities must be empowered to adapt to new regulations, take decisions to safeguard their livelihoods and protect their marine resources, and build consensus internally.

The Community Engagement Strategy has several steps, the first of which is complete as of this report.

Step 1: Creation of a Relationship-Mind Map to grasp issue complexity and stakeholder dynamics. This Map is the original idea of the Project Leader, and has three levels.

With the issue at center and all stakeholders identified surrounding the issue, Level I identifies and describes the impacts each stakeholder has on the issue, and the impact changes in the issue will have on stakeholders. For example, if the issue is fisheries management, then new regulations limiting catches will impact fishermen's livelihood and income, while overfishing and illegal fishing by fishermen impacts the ability to sustainably manage fisheries. Once all bilateral impacts are identified, Level I is complete.

Level II is the next stage of complexity, in which all dynamics between stakeholders are described. This is important because the relationship between two stakeholders, with respect to the issue, provides insight into what actions on the issue can be taken and how changing stakeholder dynamics will affect the issue. For example, the

dynamic between Foreign Aid Agencies and the Palauan National Government is one of dependence—if foreign aid suddenly decreases, the dynamic between these two stakeholders becomes strained, while putting additional pressure on fisheries to increase revenues. Similarly, the confusing jurisdiction of authority between Traditional Chiefs and State Governments means that fishing regulations that go against customary law may not be met with compliance.

Finally, Level III explores the internal mindsets of stakeholders, and the interests behind their stated positions. For example, State Governments may take the position that national regulations on fishing should not supersede state rules—this position has an underlying interest of retaining *control*, since the Palau Constitution guarantees that State Governments have full ownership of their marine resources. Level III is completed through a survey of stakeholders to get information on their perceptions and interests.

Step 2: Use the Map as a preparation tool for upcoming dialogue

Since PCS is tasked with much of the work surrounding community engagement on fisheries management, they will need to consult with communities around Palau that have various proportions of stakeholder groups (fishermen, traditional chiefs, ministry officials, etc.). The Map allows PCS to have a clear understanding of the background dynamic and mindsets that could define how the dialogue takes place, and more importantly, that could influence which topics of discussion are prone to conflict or disagreement.

Step 3: Apply tools in conflict management during consultation with communities to be sensitive to dynamics and interests

During consultation with communities, PCS will be empowered with a map of interests and dynamics, and the tools to navigate those dynamics effectively and objectively. This allows PCS to empower communities to find solutions and avenues of collaboration with other stakeholders, while helping communities resolve conflicts and reach consensus on fisheries related actions.

For example, if a given community wishes to consult with PCS on best practices for avoiding fish stock depletion, the Map may suggest that their dynamic with certain agencies or with traditional chiefs will especially be impacted—this might call for joint consultations, where the decisions can be negotiated in a dialogue facilitated by PCS. In this way, the community is engaged comprehensively, and conflicts are avoided—this is a strategy that is clear, with measurable outcomes.

Step 4: Follow-Up with communities and obtain feedback

In order to guarantee full enfranchisement of communities in the decision-making process, the engagement strategy will integrate follow-up sessions 6, 12 and possibly 18 months after decisions have been taken—these follow ups serve as

monitoring tools for progress on decided undertakings, a means to revisit conversations based on new information on stakeholder interests or changing dynamics (i.e. new Minister was appointed, or elections upcoming, etc.), and as a strategic relationship building mechanism to strengthen ties between PCS and communities.

Via follow-ups and via feedback forms the strategy will also request communities to provide their perceptions and feedback on how PCS engaged with them—this feedback will serve as a qualitative measure of the strategy’s success.

Objective 3

Outside of PCS, I have made contact with the following individuals, all of whom have expressed significant interest in similar training workshops:

- Minister Baklai Temengil, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs, Palau National Government
- Mr Joe Aitaro and Ms Judy Dean, Assistant and Director (respectively) of Palau Grants Office
- Ms Charlene Mersai, National Environment Planner, Office of Environmental Response Coordination

In the next interim report, updates on the status and confirmation of new workshops for these individuals and their staff will be provided.

Concluding Remarks

Before the next interim report, I hope to have successfully finalized the Community Engagement Strategy, developed a visual interface of the Mind Map for digital distribution to all relevant parties, and to finalize workshops for PCS affiliates and other parties under Objective 3. I will have also, in consultation with PCS, selected a test community for applying the engagement strategy.