

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

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

Under Objective 1

- As of this report, I am happy to report that Objective 1 has been successfully completed. From February 18th to the 20th, 2014, Palau Conservation Society hosted a cohort of environmental professionals including Protected Area Network Coordinators representing each of Palau's 16 states and territories. The Protected Area Network is the primary means by which the Palauan Government is able to safeguard its environmental resources and its ecosystems. The Coordinators are responsible for all negotiations and

dialogue to ensure the continuation of their respective Areas, as well as negotiation related to projects and/or policies that may impacted the Protected Areas.

- The nature of the work of this cohort places them in situations where negotiations and challenging conversations are a part of daily professional activity. As such they were the *main* target group of Palau Conservation Society.
- On Days 1 and 2 of the workshop, the Project Leader provided detailed training in negotiation to the cohort
 - The training involved theory on principled negotiation as developed by Harvard Law School's Program on Negotiation
 - Participants were asked to prepare for fictional negotiations and then conduct their negotiations through role play activities, employing an objective framework from the book *Getting to Yes*, called the 7 Elements.
 - Participants were then encouraged to come up with behaviors they found difficult to manage, and through group work and theory, the Project Leader provided several mechanisms to deal with difficult tactics—difficult tactics range from yelling, personal attacks, time pressure, to misrepresentation of information.
 - On Day 2 of the negotiation training, participants took part in a complex multi-party dispute 'game', involving six parties with varying interests in five different issues. Each party receives points if certain options under each issue are voted in.
 - Through preparation by role, informal and formal negotiations, participants were encouraged to apply all their training in one setting. The results of this activity were very promising, as both groups reached consensus deals—in all workshops where this case is used, only 20% of agreements are consensus, and out of a possible 55 agreements, only 2 are actually optimal (i.e. only 2 scenarios achieve the maximum number of points). One group did reach the Pareto-Optimal agreement by Round Two of Formal Negotiations
 - Participants were given 3 parting gifts: a set of 7 wallet-sized flash cards with all negotiation techniques; a notepad to prepare for negotiations; and a notepad to prepare for and conduct effective meetings.
- On Day 3 of the workshop, the Project Leader provided detailed training in Effective Communication Skills
 - Participants were introduced to the concept of an external and internal voice, and the challenges of managing a conversation while dealing internally with strong emotions
 - Participants were then introduced to three key mindset shifts that help with difficult conversations, generally known as the shift from certain to curious mindsets: Right/Wrong → Multiple Perceptions; Blame → Contribution; and finally, Intentions vs Impact

- To help increase awareness and adoption of these productive mindset shifts, participants were given training on three key external skills: Inquiry, Advocacy and Acknowledgement. Participants engaged in group role play to become more purposeful and strategic in the quality and quantity of each skill.
- A case study was also used where participants prepared for a difficult conversation by side, and then had conversations where they applied their training.
- As a final parting gift, participants were provided with a notepad which they could use to prepare for future difficult conversations
- In direct support of Palau Conservation Society staff activities, the Project Leader will be giving two short trainings on specialized skills to the staff of Palau Conservation Society: one in strategic relationship mapping, which allows individuals to understand complex webs of relationships and influence; and one in the process management for effective staff meetings.
- The workshop was given national exposure through the Society's newsletter, radio announcements, and a short piece on television featuring the Project Leader. On Day 1 the workshop was inaugurated by the National Finance Minister of Palau.

Under Objective 2

- The community engagement strategy was updated to include the highly successful Susskind Model of Complex Multi-Party Dispute Analysis. This model includes interviews of stakeholders, and then uses interview responses to determine key issues of importance and interests. This information is then used to create a living one-text document in which all parties' interests are outlined and options are generated to meet interests while addressing all issues. Parties offer comments in private with the conflict management professional, and new iterations of the document are circulated until such time as all parties can agree on some commitment (either on substance, or on an in-person meeting)
- The Project Leader has interviewed various stakeholders who represent different interests and different issues with respect to fishing and marine resources in Palau—these include the Director of the Bureau of Marine Resources, the Guest Relations Manager of Palau Royal Resort (Palau's largest and most lucrative hotel), leaders of all major environmental NGOs, President of Palau's National Development Bank, and others. Of note is a scheduled interview with Palau's traditional and customary leadership, the Council of High Chiefs—this interview will take place on February 21st.
- Interview responses are being compiled and an 'Issue Matrix' is being created where each issue is ranked by importance, and grouped by stakeholder—where significant overlap in importance exists, the Project Leader can identify easy targets for collaboration and negotiation. Where large differences in opinion exist on issue importance, the Project Leader can

identify targets for training in effective communication or for proposing one-text conflict assessments on behalf of Palau Conservation Society

Under Objective 3

- The National Development Bank of Palau has expressed great interest in a 2 day negotiation workshop—the Project Leader expects to have confirmation before the next interim report.

Concluding Remarks

Before the next interim report, I will have completed the large majority of interviews, and will have compiled the ratings of the workshop given (ratings are out of 5 and provide a dataset by which to measure trainer performance and workshop impact). While two communities have been identified for applying the community engagement strategy, before the next interim report I will have developed in consultation with Palau Conservation Society a means to stay involved with the application of the strategy despite being out of the country.

The next interim report will be filed on or around March 5th, 2014.

The project's field work ends March 10th, 2014.