

how much? Kronen's research is looking into this in Tonga and Fiji Islands, and in the future she will be examining food consumption patterns in other countries.

Given their important role in supplying household food needs, community members, researchers, fisheries scientists and resource managers have advocated for many years that women and communities should play a more active and significant role in managing marine resources, and have recommended that they be included in consultations and decisions regarding nearshore coastal resources. Fortunately, this is now happening in many places, as is discussed in the 'News from the Community Fisheries Section'. But as Liz Matthews suggests in her article on p. 13, it may be time to go further, and do more to educate women and communities about the dangers of overfishing, the need for sound conservation practices, and the importance of all species to the health of the marine ecosystem. Subsistence and artisanal fishing is often neither monitored or regulated by local fisheries departments, and unless the species has a commercial value (such as trochus), very little information is likely to be available. Matthews, in a second article (p. 15), illustrates this point with regard to the collection of land crabs. Although an important and popular food item, land crabs are completely unmonitored in Palau; the same applies in many Pacific Island countries, and probably outside the region as well. This is also true for other organisms, especially marine invertebrate species.

In addition to a lack of information about many subsistence species, there's still much we don't know about how those species are being harvested. Although it has been done for decades, there is still a need to document traditional knowledge about fishing. As Mark Merlin's article (p. 27) points out, in Micronesia alone there are numerous plants used to make fish traps, baskets, nets, poles and poisons for catching fish. For community-based management of marine resources to be effective, we need to better understand such traditional methods.

The article by Mohammad Ali Shah, under the socioeconomic theme, brings to light the problems of women from fishing communities who become marginalised when cheap labour and modern fishing gear nudges them out of their traditional role of net weavers and fish cleaners. On a more positive note, Denise Cardoso's article (p. 24) discusses how access to paid labour greatly improved the socioeconomic status of women in some parts of Brazil.

I hope you'll find the articles in this issue of the *Women in Fisheries* bulletin interesting. I welcome any feedback on them and encourage you to submit articles about women and community fishing matters from your country.

***Kim Des Rochers***

## NEWS FROM THE

Community  
Fisheries  
Section



### Staff changes - New SPC Community Fisheries Officer

Aliti Vunisea joined SPC's Community Fisheries Section in July as the new Community Fisheries Officer (formerly held by Lyn Lambeth). Aliti previously worked at the University of the South Pacific (USP) as a lecturer with the Marine Studies Programme. While she was at USP, Aliti complemented her academic responsibilities with community work, especially in the field of women in fisheries and rural development. Her post-graduate studies work focussed on the subsistence fisheries

in Fiji Islands, specifically looking at changing women's role in the face of modernization and monetization. Since then, Aliti has also worked with NGOs, conservation agencies and government departments in Fiji on areas relating to community fisheries and development and management, and women's roles in fisheries in Fiji and the region. She was also actively involved with the Women in Fisheries Network, a regional NGO based in Suva, which actively participates in com-

munity training for women, organises meetings for rural women, conducts train the trainers workshops, and many other activities. Aliti has also been involved with Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA), a network of practitioners involved in assisting communities set up community-based marine resource management in Fiji.

Aliti hopes to continue the work started by Patricia Tuara and Lyn Lambeth on assessing the contribution and participation of men and women in fishing activities in the region, and highlighting ways of maximising participation by different sectors of the

communities. Aliti also hopes to document traditional marine resource knowledge and compile a basic inventory of the most used marine products (for food and other basic needs) by local communities. She believes that such information is useful for long-term planning and management projects for coastal resources. Depending on funding, Aliti would like to conduct research into marine resource dependence at the community level, identifying food changes, changing consumption and needs patterns.

Aliti will continue the section's tradition of training and capacity building.

## Community-based fisheries management initiatives

*By Aliti Vunisea, SPC Community Fisheries Officer*

The Community Fisheries Section is working to facilitate the establishment of marine protected areas (MPAs), or fisheries reserves, through its work with regional fisheries departments. The community-based initiative, which looks at offering technical advice and expertise in the establishment of management initiatives, has adopted a participatory approach to ensure community involvement. The approach is based on the Samoa community-based resource management initiative, which has been implemented in more than 70 villages in the country and which has been in place for the last six years. The section also considers models and approaches used elsewhere.

Other Pacific Island countries such as Fiji Islands, Cook Islands, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, have adopted their own approaches to community-based management. Most of these efforts have been facilitated by non-governmental organisations, learning institutions and conservation agencies, and most have been small-scale, covering limited areas. SPC's Community Fisheries Section attempts to assist countries in approaching fisheries management from a broader perspective, with the fisheries departments taking the lead role in conservation attempts. The increasing concern for coastal fisheries and the need to retain or regenerate fisheries stocks to ensure a reliable food and economic source base, has prompted an emphasis on fisheries management at the community level.

### Samoa

The Samoa community-based management programme has been a success, and the funding received from AusAID has allowed for the recruitment of extra staff and the acquisition of more facilities to carry out the project. The well-defined *matai* or chiefly system in Samoa has also been a contributing factor to the success of the project in this country.

### American Samoa

A community-based management project was initiated in American Samoa in 2001. The local fisheries department has established a Community Management Section to take over management responsibilities. The initiative received considerable support in American Samoa in the beginning, but the first six-monthly project review indicates that many community members are finding it difficult to attend fisheries management committee meetings because of their own work commitments. The timing of community meetings has been difficult in American Samoa because many people have full-time jobs on top of other domestic duties.



SPC Community Fisheries Adviser with staff from the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources in American Samoa

### Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands community-based fisheries management project began in 2001 and has received considerable support from local communities. Workshops in the Marshall Islands have been conducted and the project will be reviewed in late 2002.



Women's group at a community-based participatory learning workshop in the Marshall Islands



Training participants conducting a 'stroll through' assessment in the Marshall Islands

## Fisheries training workshop in Fiji Islands: The I Qoliqoli Management Project

By Aliti Vunisea, SPC Community Fisheries Officer

A training workshop on community-based marine resource management for fisheries extension officers in Fiji Islands was conducted by SPC's Community Fisheries Adviser and Community Fisheries Officer 29 July to 9 August. The workshop, which was held at USP's Institute of Pacific Studies, involved 28 extension officers from throughout Fiji. The workshop was held in response to a request from Fiji's Fisheries Division for advice on setting up a model for marine resource management for the country. Training of trainers was a first step in the initiation of the I Qoliqoli Management Project for Fiji.

At the end of the workshop, a sample management plan for the I Qoliqoli Management Project was drafted. Participants were expected to be equipped with the skills to conduct or facilitate community-based workshops and learning. They were also expected to have acquired enough skills and knowledge to identify community needs and assist communities in the drafting of marine resource management plans, and the establishment of a community management committee. In addition to this, trainers were expected to be able to hold their own training workshops for their officers. The sample management plan to be used by the Fisheries Division, is a plan for Marau village.

The schedule of activities for the first six-months of the project are:

- The implementation of an ongoing marine awareness programme to promote both the importance of sustainable marine resource use and the need for management to local communities and the public in general.
- The provision of in-house training for fisheries officers in the four main divisions in Fiji: Central, Northern, Eastern and Western.
- The drafting of management plans for 12 different villages or communities in Fiji. The sites

and locations of these will be determined by requests and interests from coastal communities.

- The submission of funding proposals to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for possible SPREP funding.
- The securing of facilities and equipment such as vehicles, computers, and equipment for field exercise.
- The monitoring of progress on the project, which will also determine any follow-up work to be undertaken by SPC.

Project contact persons from the Fiji Fisheries Division are Sunia Waqainabete and Vasiti Vuiyasawa.

To implement the tasks outlined in the work plan, Fiji Locally Managed Marine Areas (FLMMA), ministries and NGOs will work closely with the Fisheries Division.

FLMMA is an association of practitioners working with community-based marine resource management in Fiji, including NGOs, institutions, ministries of government, and interested individuals.

### Background to the project

Fiji Islanders, like other Pacific Islanders, depend heavily on coastal resources. With an ever-increasing population, commercialisation of previously subsistence food sources, increasing urbanisation, improved fishing methods and gear, and other internal and external factors affecting the availability of resources, there is an obvious need for management. Most Pacific Island peoples still live a subsistence lifestyle, and the long-term sustainability of their coastal resources is crucial for the survival not only of the current population but also of future generations. Marine resource management is, therefore, essential for long-term food security and social livelihoods.

Of primary importance, therefore, is the empowerment of coastal communities to manage their own resources. Most fisheries departments are ill equipped to take over all management responsibilities, and involving local communities gives citizens the opportunity to be responsible for their own resources and the future of their peoples' livelihood. Furthermore, in most Pacific Island countries, local people have jurisdiction or ownership rights over their resources, so their involvement is crucial.

For the last six years in Fiji there have been ongoing attempts at raising awareness about the marine environment, and attempts to establish marine resource management projects. Most of these efforts were spearheaded by NGOs and the Institute of Applied Sciences at USP.

Organisations involved in community-based marine resource management recently formed an association where they could exchange ideas on the different projects they were involved with so that similar community-based work project standards could be established.

Community-based projects in Fiji are underway with the following institutions and organisations:

- Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific (FSP) — Cuvu District, Nadroga.
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-Fiji) — Ono District in Kadavu and Wai in Nadroga
- Institute of Pacific Studies — Verata District in Tailevu, Votua in Ba, Marine Affairs Programme, USP, Vanuaso in Gau, and other areas
- International Marinelife Alliance (IMA) — Nakasaleka District in Kadavu
- Women in Fisheries Network (WIFN) — Namena District in Tailevu.

Note that district means several villages under the same administrative authority. Interest in community-based management is evident in the number of requests to FLMMA from interested communities. The association has requests from 13 communities for the establishment of community-based marine resource management projects.

### **Tools used by FLMMA and other NGOs in Fiji**

FLMMA and other NGOs have adopted a participatory approach with participatory learning activities (PLA) forming most of the awareness work. Visits and initial awareness work usually takes a

year to two year and requires a process where communities can accept their responsibility before management initiatives are in place. In areas where management has been in place for more than a year, monitoring skills and processes become part of the PLA tools taught. Some of the stated cases are success stories, for example Verata in Tailevu and Waisomo in Kadavu. In these cases the organisations have pulled out from the projects and only pay visits when required. The communities have taken over the management and monitoring work, and in both cases, both men and women are involved in all activities. This is a clear indication of the potential for success of community-based management initiatives if implemented on a wider scale.

This I Qoliqoli Management Project is an attempt to get the Fisheries Division to implement resource management initiatives on a broader scale. At the same time, the department can put existing facilities and funding towards other projects. The I Qoliqoli management project was initiated in September 2002, and will be reviewed in early 2003.

### **Recommendations**

- Establish a vigorous media campaign to promote the I Qoliqoli management project.
- Raise community awareness about the need for long-term sustainability of marine resources.
- Take an integrated approach to the marine awareness and community-based marine resource management project.
- Work with FLMMA and other ministries, NGOs and institutions already working in marine resource management in Fiji, to ensure that local situations, traditions and needs are taken into account.
- Involve all stakeholders at all levels of the project.
- Implement the project as requested from the communities.
- Involve SPC's Community Fisheries Adviser at the initial community workshop in Fiji, and at FLMMA-organised workshops so that tools and procedures already used in Fiji can be observed.
- Follow up on possible SPREP funding for the project.

