

Participatory, Learning and Action (PLA) Resource Guide for Practitioners

*To Build, Enhance and Promote Resource
Conservation and Management*



American Samoa Context



Foreword

Collaborative management is one of the most effective tools to ensure community participation in resource management. It describes a partnership among different stakeholders for the management of an area or resources. More managers, researchers, leaders and politicians are realizing that sharing management rights and responsibilities with various stakeholders, particularly the local communities, is the positive way to a long-term conservation and effective management of natural resources.

It has been experienced that Participatory, Learning and Action (PLA) approach could assist in assessing a community's perceptions on management, identifying activities that have impacted the resources, issues and threats to the communities and their resources, management needs and recommendations on best management strategies for a community. This guide provides steps and tools on how to use a participatory approach to engage and gain participation of local communities in American Samoa. The participatory approach and tools are from previous work experiences used in gathering information from village communities and building partnership with communities in managing the resources. The PLA approach is a simple, creative and effective way to engage and allow all sectors within a community to participate in discussions to assess their concerns and issues, learn and become aware of the issues, and develop actions that will best improve the management of their resources in collaboration with other stakeholders. It is the hope of many resource managers that the effective collaboration and management of the resources by the government and local people will result in more healthy and abundant resources for tomorrow. For future effectiveness and long-term success of managing the resources in American Samoa, there is a need to develop a community network, through active participation and support, for better collaboration among local communities and improved resource management.

Acknowledgements

This guide book is indeed a product of a collaborative process. The tools and activities developed in this guide were gathered from previous PLA workshops and meetings held with various communities and had shown great results to the resource managers to better understand the issues and recommendations to improve resource management in American Samoa.

The document was compiled and prepared by Fatima Sauafea-Le'au (NOAA-PIRO Habitat Conservation Division) with assistance from Michael Guillbeaux (LMMA Network) and Solialofi Tuaumu (ASDOC-CZMP) in providing comments and guidance on the early drafts of this document. The document was revised and improved by Clare Shelton (Coral Reef Advisory Group) and Ephraim Temple (ASCC/Sea Grant).

The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program and PIRO– Habitat Conservation Division provided the financial support and guidance to facilitate and implement the PLA projects and for the production of this guide.

Acronyms

ASCC	American Samoa Community College
ASG	American Samoa Government
ASPA	American Samoa Power Authority
CRAG	Coral Reef Advisory Group
CZMP	Coastal Zone Management Program
DMWR	Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOE	Department of Education
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
LAS	Local Action Strategy
LMMA	Local Marine Managed Area
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NOAA-PIRO	National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration-Pacific Island Regional Office
PLA	Participatory, Learning and Action
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
US	United States

Table of Contents

Foreword	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Acronyms	iii
I. Introduction	1
II. PLA Approach	3
III. Principles of PLA	4
IV. Definition of Participation	4
V. Importance of Community Participation	5
VI. Expectations from Community Participation and Support	6
VII. Tips for Practitioners	7
VIII. The Practitioner as a Facilitator	7
IX. Checklist to organize a PLA workshop	9
X. PLA Selected Tools and Activities	12
Tool 1: Collective Vision.....	12
Tool 2: Historical Profile and Timeline.....	15
Tool 3: Resource Mapping.....	18
Tool 4: Impact Flow Diagram.....	19
Tool 5: Basics Concepts of Conservation and Development.....	20
Tool 6: Problem Identification.....	21
Tool 7: Causes and Solution Analysis.....	22
Tool 8: Priority Matrix and Ranking.....	23
Tool 9: Stakeholder Analysis.....	26
Tool 10: Action Planning Matrix.....	27
Tool 11: SWOT Analysis.....	28
XI. From PLA to Next Steps	29
References	32

I. Introduction

In the past, the ‘experts’ in development organizations mainly initiated development at the community level. Community consultation, if any, was limited to the community leaders who were often older men. Most of the people in the community were generally excluded from the decision-making processes on issues such as land-use, natural resources and fisheries management. As a consequence, these centralized approaches to management were often not successful and did not gain people’s support.

Several environment and resource management agencies as well as the local Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG) recognized the differences in interest, use and users, and knowledge of the marine environment and its resources from various groups of people in a community. Therefore to ensure stakeholder participation, the use of participatory tools for information gathering, planning, decision- making, monitoring and evaluation is very important.

Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is a community action program that engages all sectors of the community, especially women and youth. In addition, PLA will guarantee the sustainable development of the resources by ensuring a wider participation and capacity building at the community level. Having people involved in the information gathering, developing, planning and implementation will give people the responsibility and accountability for their actions in resource use.

The PLA approach was introduced in American Samoa in 2005 through a PLA training for resource managers and a workshop for village mayors. This collaborative work between NOAA-PIRO and the Fiji Local Marine Managed Area (LMMA) Network helped developed the basic PLA tools for communities in American Samoa that have gained interest and significance to improve local resource programs. The approach is well known in Fiji for engaging village communities and various organizations in planning and facilitating projects to improve resource management. Several communities in Fiji, who have gone through the PLA approach, are implementing appropriate strategies to meet their management needs and gaining the support and participation from both government and non-government sectors.

PLA aids in gathering information using a diverse range of activities and methods. It cuts through social and traditional barriers like age, sex and status hindrances. In addition, it is a way of building capacity at the community level and exposing potential of the people involved.

The material in the resource guide represents only a basic introduction to the approaches and tools. It also include sample activities that will provide a practitioner with an idea on how the tool could be facilitated. Practitioners and trainers are encouraged to supplement the information here with their own experiences. In particular, practitioners may know of other participation tools that may be more relevant to the community or target group with which their workshop participants are familiar with.



*PLA workshops on
village watersheds and
marine resources—
Resource Mapping tool*



II. PLA Approach

1. Background Research:
 - Background of your target community; history of the place/community; natural resources.
2. Preparing the PLA team:
 - Different disciplines; good working team; experience in PLA workshops and exercises; availability during training dates.
3. Develop a PLA workshop goals and objectives:
 - Depending on the needs and issues from the target community for a PLA workshop, develop goals and objectives to better facilitate the PLA workshop.
4. Logistic and planning:
 - Communication with appropriate contacts; prepare a workshop budget for related direct costs; venue; food; safety; transportation; accommodation; schedule/program; and work-plan.
5. Conduct PLA Workshop
 - The workshop is conducted with PLA tools that will assist in achieving the goals and objectives.
6. Analysis of PLA findings:
 - Information from the PLA workshop needs to be carefully analyzed and reviewed together by PLA facilitators and representatives from the village or target group. The information needs to be extracted in relation to the original objectives to help draw out the conclusions for the PLA workshop.
7. Follow-up
 - Once the final PLA workshop report has been completed, the results and recommendations should be presented back to the community for further discussion and development of follow-up activities and pilot projects.

III. Principles of PLA

The following principles of Participatory, Learning and Action will help participants to understand and experience the key concepts as they participate in each principle of the PLA activities.

- Use a clear and fun method
- Use a creative learning process
- Involve all sectors from a community or target group
- Relate the action to the situation
- Facilitation is conducted by experts and stakeholders
- The action continues after the workshop

Brainstorm:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of Participation?
2. What are some types of participation?

IV. Definition of Participation

Participation can take different forms, ranging from information sharing and consultation methods, to mechanisms for collaboration and empowerment that give stakeholders more influence and control.

Collaborative management is one form of participatory management in that it entails a conscious and official distribution of responsibility, with the formal vesting of some authority. In this sense, co-management goes beyond community consultation and participatory planning to establish more durable, verifiable and equitable forms of participation, involving all relevant and legitimate stakeholders in the management and conservation of resources.

V. Importance of Community Participation

Local people know the causes and remedies to many problems with our resources and environment. They know where to find and use plants with unique properties and they have good systems to prevent damage to crops and seedlings by wild animals. They can offer shelter, labor, food and tools. Local people also offer flexibility to projects, and they allow them to respond to local conditions, thus projects are likely to be more effective and successful. Involving these people in the planning and management of the resources can help build support by investing their interest in the well being of their natural resources, fill in some gaps when government or other resource organizations lack the necessary funds and personnel for effective resource management, and make resource management more responsive to variations and changes in social and environmental conditions. In addition, the management of the resources will be more effective when communities are ensured that the benefits from managing the resources reach the same communities and that the cultural, social and economic needs and concerns of the communities affected by the resources are addressed.

Experience has shown that community natural resource management requires the local community to feel that the process belongs to them. This ownership can be constructed through good facilitation and good participatory process but equally it can be permanently destroyed by poor understanding of the process of building ownership and by inadequate facilitation. Thus, it is crucial that the support agencies understand the importance of long term process over short term product and ensure that good facilitation skills are available.

The techniques of participatory learning and action (PLA) and principles of adaptive management are extremely useful in assisting communities to develop for themselves successful marine resource management and monitoring plans. With community monitoring, analysis and discussion the results of the implementation of the plans can be evaluated and the plan modified accordingly. Such skills development can also assist communities in tackling other problems they face.

The participatory process should be “objective-driven, not tools driven” and will generally seek to:

- increase equity and self-determination
- increase likelihood of project continuation once external support ceases
- increased appropriateness of conservation initiatives
- increase sense of ownership of project
- increase likelihood of the project being successful

VI. Expectations from Community Participation and Support

The expectations from how the community participates support and collaborate in resource management and related activities include the following:

1. Local knowledge, skill and resources are fully utilized
2. Increased efficiency and effectiveness
3. Sharing of problems awareness, resource potential and opportunities
4. A pool of knowledge and skills
5. Promotion of local self-reliance



PLA Watershed Outreach in Nu'uuli 2010—Methodist Youth Group

VII. Tip for Practitioners:

Learn by Doing:

The training seminars or workshops on participatory methodologies and approaches are best done in an experimental manner. That is, participants or trainers should use the opportunity to learn-by-doing even if there is no opportunity for actually practicing the techniques in the field. Instead, simulation exercises can be performed in the classroom, using hypothetical or real-life cases, role plays, and hands-on use of the techniques to give participants a feel of how the tools and their methodologies are applied. These sessions can be combined with brief presentations and discussions.

Training Course Learning Objectives:

The objective of most training course on participatory approaches and tools, particular the PLA Approach Training for Practitioners or Trainers in American Samoa is not to equip participants with all of the skills needed to go out and use these tools in the field. Rather, the learning objective is usually to familiarize participants with the tools, enabling them to understand:

- What the tool has to offer;
- What kinds of questions and issues the tool can address;
- What kinds of outputs they can expect from the tools;
- What inputs (time, funds, skills, attitudes, training, logistical support) would be required to undertake the tool; and

How to go about designing, implementing, supervising the use of the tools by others (for example, your agency, organization, selected community members)

VIII. The Practitioner as a Facilitator

The key role of the **facilitator** is to ensure that learning is optimized during each session. They will adapt the style of teaching and learning according to the needs of each session and the participants, so they will be capable of applying a range of dynamic styles.

Facilitators play a key role in managing site visits and exercises, supporting the less confident and maintaining a harmonious learning environment. They may do some up-front delivery of their own if they are specialists in a particular field, but their main role is to draw knowledge and experience from the group so that they learn from each other (Ecowomen, PLA guide).

Features of a good Facilitator

A good facilitator...

- Keeps the group focused on task and objectives
- Remains objective
- Provides guidance in helping the group to chart its course and accomplish its goals
- Listens more than talk
- Adapts to various learning styles
- Encourages everyone to participate while remembering that individuals participate in different ways. Some may talk only in small groups, but are still participating. Others may wish to talk constantly and may be contributing little
- Protects members of the group from attack by the others
- Is gender and culture sensitive
- Helps keep the group within time constraints
- Energizes a group or slows it down as needed
- Recaps, occasionally, what has happened in the workshop and helps the group to make connections between the sessions

You could become a good facilitator if you follow the above tips and also...

- Are alert to signs of confusion (asking neighbors questions, puzzled or frustrated looks, resistance etc)
- Don't do the group's work. Learning is more effective and lasting if the I individuals and small groups discover on their own (learn by doing)

- Circulate, but don't become part of any group because you may all too easily influence the group
- Spend sufficient time with each group during small group work to be certain that they have grasped the tasks and concepts supporting them
- Review portions of the workshop that are causing confusion if several individuals or groups are having trouble
- Ask frequently if there are questions
- When YOU ask a question, give groups and individuals time to think before answering. Better, ask people to discuss a question in pairs if it is more complex, so that they all participate and have time to respond constructively
- Remind the group that they have as much expertise and experience (and possibly more collectively) as the 'expert'
- Bounce ideas back to groups and ask them what THEY think – let them know that they have something valuable to say and that you are interested
- Be flexible!

Make it FUN!

Brainstorm:

1. How would you facilitate a meeting where there's conflict between stakeholders on ownership of the management area?
2. How would you, as a facilitator, get everyone in a meeting to speak or engaged in a discussion?

IX. Checklist to organize a PLA Workshop

In putting together a PLA workshop, the trainer will need to be sure that everything is in place, from the extending of invitations to the participants to the arrangements for coffee and snacks during the workshop. A checklist of some key concerns in preparing for a PLA workshop includes the following:

- Are you clear about the overall workshop objectives?
- What are your specific workshop objectives?
- Have you reached an agreement with co-coordinators about the roles, workshop objectives, and workshop styles?
- Have you adapted your schedule to the time of year when the workshop is being held?
- Have you planned your sessions taking into account the time of day when they will take place?
- Are you planning to use several techniques to calm yourself before the workshop starts?
- Have you prepared materials to support the goals and objectives of your workshop?
- Have you developed a workshop agenda that will keep participants motivated to participate and entertain?
- Have you planned for question and answer sessions?
- Are the room and seating arrangements suitable for your workshop?
- Have you planned an evaluation for your workshop?



PLA Training Workshop for village mayors in 2005

Example of a PLA Community Workshop Agenda:

VATIA WETLAND PLA WORKSHOP

AGENDA

Thursday – November 27, 2008- 9:00am-2:00pm

Desired Outcomes:

1. Increase community awareness and knowledge of Vatia wetlands and its related natural resources
2. Develop a draft action plan to assist wetland conservation and preservation
3. Enhance and build community capacity through networking and collaboration with ASG and partners

Welcoming Remarks	Director
Overview of Wetlands	Program Leader
Overview of PLA workshop goals/objectives	Facilitator
PLA Tool 1: Collective Vision Presentations of results and discussion	Facilitator
PLA Tool 2: Historical Profile Presentation of results and discussion	Facilitator
Break (Raffle – win a prize)	
PLA Tool 3: Identification of Problems/Causes and Solution Presentation of results and discussion	Facilitator
PLA Tool 4: Ranking Matrix and Prioritization Presentation of results and discussion	Facilitator
Brea, (Raffle – win a prize)	
PLA Tool 5: Stakeholder Analysis Presentation of results and discussion	Facilitator
PLA Tool 6: Action Plan and Next Steps Presentation of results and discussion	Facilitator
Evaluation/Certificate Presentation	
Closing	Program Leader

Brainstorm:

1. How do you plan and develop a workshop agenda for your target group?
2. How would you keep participants throughout the whole workshop?

X. PLA Selected Tools and Activities

The tools described in this training guide are creative, fun and relatively easy to apply. However, practitioners must avoid the temptation to apply tools just “because they are listed”. The tools should be used in response to the objectives of the specific process designed. For this, it is important to have clear objectives and to design an appropriate overall process.

The PLA tools listed and described in this guide are the most popular and often used in previous PLA workshops in American Samoa. Participatory tools are selected and used depending on the goals and objectives of the workshop.

Tool 1: COLLECTIVE VISION

A **Vision** is defined as ‘An image of the future we seek to create’. It is statement that sometimes called a picture of your environment in the future but it’s so much more than that. Your vision statement is your inspiration, the framework for all your strategic planning.

A vision statement may apply to an entire village or to a specific area within that village. Whether for all or part of a management area, the vision statement answers the question, “Where do we want to go?”

While a vision statement doesn’t tell you how you’re going to get there, it does set the direction for your planning. That’s why it’s important when crafting a vision statement to let your imagination go and dare to dream – and why it’s important that a vision statement captures your passion.

Objective:

- To assist the participants or a community to identify what they want for themselves and their resources in the future

Methods and Activities:**Activity 1:**

1. Divide into smaller groups (depending on the number of people)
2. Each group receive drawing papers, markers, and pens
3. Sit silently for 5 minutes
4. Imagine – future of one of your communities ; one that can be created by the communities
 - Physical look
 - What services, physical goods to have
 - Attitudes towards each other
 - How would they work with each other
 - What resources to have (forest, sea)
 - Health of those resources
5. Each draw their vision and describe their pictures
6. Representative from each group will present their vision and describe the pictures
7. Discuss the visions by each group
8. Draw a combined vision, adding members vision together

KEEP IN MIND – Have the different groups in the community (women, youths, men, children & elders) draw up their vision as a separate group. Each group’s vision is to be incorporated into a community vision.

FOR DISCUSSION AS A GROUP

- what were the similarities in the members pictures
- what were the differences
- how did the group sort out the differences

Activity 2:

The following goal-setting activity is designed to be completed collaboratively. This activity can be used successfully in a variety of settings where people need to develop a group statement. It allows for more casual, less intimidating experience.

1. Direct everyone to think for a moment about why they, as individuals, chose to join the “campaign on resource conservation and management” (as an example).
2. Hand out a 3”x5” white index cards to each participant.
3. Ask each participant to write an overall statement on their card about the impact they intend to work towards over the coming months. (Restrict to two sentences).
4. Give participants 5 minutes to complete this task.
5. Divide into small groups.
6. Hand out a 4”x6” colored index card to each group.
7. Have each group members work together to create two sentence on the “community” impact they intend to work towards over the coming months.



Community engaged in utilizing the Vision tool

Tool 3: HISTORICAL PROFILE AND TIMELINE

The Historical Profile and timeline is developed to document some of the events, people, and geographical landmarks that have played a role in the story of the village. It is an overview of some of the more significant events that helped shape the village’s past and future.

A historical profile is a tool for assessing gradual changes that their causes are making. To construct a historical profile in a workshop situation, participants are asked to recall major events that have taken place in the community with approximate dates. These can relate to the introduction of new technologies, political events or natural disasters.

This technique is used when there is a need to see current problems from a historical perspective. Through this approach, one can understand the broad dimensions of a problem, and identify constraints and opportunities for resolving them (Norton and Mumford 1993).

Objectives:

- It provides a structured means of bringing together information on a range of aspects that may all have had some influence on the development of the problem;
- Used as a workshop tool, the historical profile sets an agenda, helps to focus discussion, provides a simplified method of communication between participants from different disciplines, and stimulates interaction.

Methods and Activity:

1. Identify the major factors that directly or indirectly influence the development of a particular problem.
2. Determine the relevant time period over which changes in these factors are to be considered; 20 years or more is often desirable.

A series of graphs can then be drawn, using expert opinion available in the workshop group, or from various statistical sources. The level of detail required in drawing the historical profile is simply that which is sufficient to indicate important trends and relationships. Further detail may add little to a good, rough assessment.

In the process of constructing the historical profile, hypotheses or key questions are raised. It also provides a rigorous basis for thinking about possible future developments (or scenarios) that can affect the status of the problem and the ability of those concerned to deal with them.

Example of Historical Profile:

Changes	1960 – 1980	1980 - 2000	2000 - Present
Population			
Fishing Methods			



PLA Watershed Outreaches in Nu’uuli 2010: Top—Mormon youth group; Bottom-Catholic Youth Group



PLA Community Workshop on MPA at Matu’tu and Faganeanea village

8. Allow each team 20 minutes to write the final statement.
9. Ask a volunteer from each group to read out their cards.
10. Discuss on the impact members intend to work towards over the coming months.
11. At the end of the discussion, write out a clean version agreed by everyone.

Examples of Vision Statements

McDonalds Vision Statement:

“McDonald's vision is to be the world's best quick service restaurant experience. Being the best means providing outstanding quality, service, cleanliness, and value, so that we make every customer in every restaurant smile.”

Toyota Vision Statement:

“To become the most successful and respected lift truck company in the U.S.”

American Samoa Coral Reef Fishery Management LAS Vision Statement:

“Healthy marine ecosystem with sustainable fisheries to support the people and future generations of the Samoa archipelago”.



Left—PLA Community Workshop in Aunu'u 2009;



Right—PLA Training for Trainers 2009

Tool 2: RESOURCE MAPPING AND MODELING

This is one of the most important tools in resource management. It helps to identify important features of the community environment in their perception, their current and past usage of resources and their concerns and problems. This map should eventually contain much of the information that the community will need for planning.

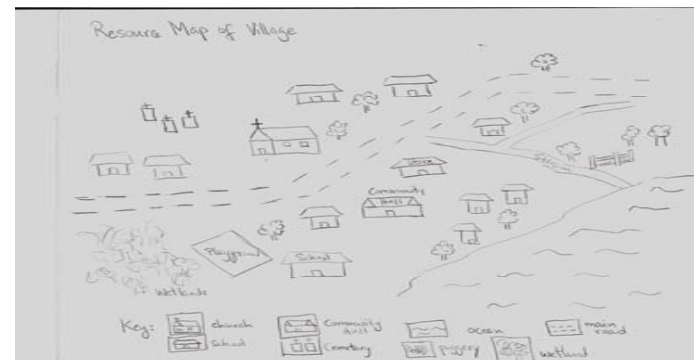
Objectives:

- To obtain a clear picture of the local perception of the environment, and the access, control, and use of resources;
- To empower or enable the community to better understand their own environment and social living condition.

Methods and Activity:

1. To start the mapping process, point to a specific landmark nearby and mark it on a map
2. Select symbols to represent certain things and draw a map of the community and surroundings
3. Include physical features, water sources, waste disposal, resource use, streams, etc
4. Make 1 or 2 maps (one of the present and a map of the past e.g. 1960's – best to do map of past with older people)
5. Make sure that all important points raised are noted or shown on the map. Additional comments should be recorded by the facilitator in a notepad

Example of Resource Mapping:



Tool 4: IMPACT FLOW DIAGRAM

The purpose of this method is to understand the contributing causes or reasons for a particular problem or issue, or to identify effects or impacts of a particular change. This method can help to broaden insights about impact to include positive and negative, expected and unexpected, and direct and indirect impacts.

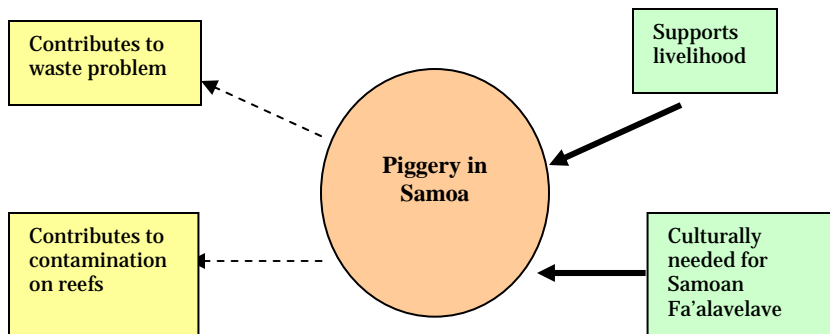
Objective:

- To assess the impact of a major event (eg. Flood, hurricane, etc.) or important factor (Marine protected area, Sanctuary, Watershed management area, Wetland management area, etc.) on the community.

Methods and Activity:

1. Place the important event or factor in a circle
2. Discuss how it affects the community, both positively and/or negatively, and list these effects around the circle

Example of Impact Flow Diagram:



Tool 5: BASIC CONCEPTS ON CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPEMNT

In this tool, it is important to explore the concepts of conservation and development, and to better understand what these concepts mean to participants.

Objectives:

- To have participants understand the difference between development and conservation;
- To understand the role of the community in conservation and in development processes;
- To identify the benefits from conservation and development.

Methods and Activity:

1. Divide the main group into two, each with its own facilitator
 2. Ask one group to go outside to another place
 3. The facilitator of one group asks participants to think about what the term 'development' means to them. "What images come into your mind when you hear this term?"
 4. The facilitator of second group asks the group to think about what the term 'conservation' means to them, and asks them, "What images come into your mind when you hear this term?"
- Distribute markers and papers to each group. Ask the members of the 'development group' and the 'conservation group' to each draw a picture or symbols representing their respective concepts. (Simple drawings will help explain their understanding of the terms)
5. Discuss and review these terms – following questions to ask:
 - Who should be involved in the development and conservation? In what way? - — - What is the role of the community in conservation and the development process?- - - Any benefits from development and conservation?
 6. Record the key issues and recommendations

Tool 6: PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Resource conservation starts when community members recognize that they have concerns about the present and future conditions of their community and their resources. The community should recognize the need to conserve and protect the resources for the future and thus need to make careful decision about the future. One of the ways to get started is by collectively list the issues and assess the major issues face by the community.

Objectives:

- To identify problems and issues from participants or a community;
- To become aware of the issues that impact the community and its resources.

Methods and Activity:

In order to generate a preliminary list of problems there at least three options:

1. Mapping exercise in Tool 2 (Resource Mapping) may incorporate questions such as “write on the map a problem/something you don’t like” and the responses to these can be collated.
2. Other tools and exercises will also generate a list of problems to be used
3. A brainstorming exercise can be used to generate a list of problems.

The problems identified should be discussed and clarified. Tools such as ranking or matrices may be used to help participants focus on relevant or key problems.



Village member presenting its community action plan developed during the PLA workshop in 2006

Tool 7: CAUSES AND SOLUTION ANALYSIS

This tool will determine the root causes of the identified problems and possible solutions.

Objective:

- To help participants or a community find and agree on the underlying causes of problems and examine the links between these root causes and their effects. This provides a basis for discussion of solutions.

Methods and Activity:

1. In smaller groups, have each group discuss each problem from Tool 6 to identify the causes and effects
2. A facilitator should ask the group to look at each causes identified to develop solutions for each causes of the problems
3. Have a presenter from each group to present the matrix for this activity

This exercise can be carried out as a matrix. An example is as follow:

Problems	Causes	Effects	Solution
Pollution			
Overfishing			
Piggeries			
Population growth			
Illegal harvest-			

Tool 8: PRIORITY MATRIX AND RANKING

This tool allows participants to rate which coastal resource issues (problems and threats) are the most important that their community is facing. Ranking is critical when comparing information on the basis of strength, importance or other predefined criteria.

Objectives:

- To have the participants or community prioritize their most important problems and threats;
- To help the participants or community to identify where they should focus their management efforts and time

This exercise requires the listing of problems/threats identified by the group in previous exercise outputs.

Methods and Activity:

1. Explain the exercise to the group how they themselves are going to identify the most important problems/threats that are facing the community using the pair-wise ranking method which allows for a more objective, comparative approach.
2. Break into small groups of 4 to 6 persons. Give each group a piece of butcher’s paper and some markers.
3. Instruct each small group to create a ranking table on their piece of paper. Add one to the total number of identified problems/threats, and tell the small groups to divide the table into this many columns and rows. For example, if 9 threats/problems were identified, then the table should be divided so that it has 10 rows and 10 columns.

Ranking

Ranking can be carried in a number of ways but it is important that the facilitator and group not become too obsessed with obtaining a rank or score. One of the most important reasons for using this tool is to encourage discussion and comparison of issues and their

4. In the **top row** of boxes in the table, skip the first, far left-hand side box and then thereafter title each problem/threat into the remaining boxes. Now, under the **far left-hand column**, skip one row down and then enter each problem/threat down into the rows below. Be sure to enter the problems/threats in the same order across the top row and down the far left-hand side.
5. Next, diagonally through the middle of the table from the top left to bottom right, note where the same title in the rows and columns meet (for example, where the “Threat 2” column meets the “Threat 2” row). These squares and all those below them in the column should be blocked out. Each small group should now have a ranking table ready that looks similar to the example below.

Figure: A ranking table of 9 threats/problems ready to be filled out.

	(Threat 1)	(Threat 2)	(Threat 3)	(Threat 4)	(Threat 5)	(Threat 6)	(Threat 7)	(Threat 8)	(Threat 9)
(Threat 1)									
(Threat 2)							X		
(Threat 3)									
(Threat 4)									
(Threat 5)									
(Threat 6)									
(Threat 7)									
(Threat 8)									
(Threat 9)									

6. Now it is time to do the paired rankings. In each open box, compare the threat/problem listed above the box against that listed on its far left. For example, in the box with the “x” in the figure above, the comparison would be between Threat 7 (listed above) versus Threat 2 (listed to its far left). In this comparison, have the small group ask themselves which of these two threats/problems is more important for the community to resolve. “Importance” will be both in terms of how severe/extreme the threat or problem is, and also in terms of how much impact it is having on people’s lives and their resources. When the small groups comes to agreement on which of the two threats/problems is more important for their community to address, write the name of the threat in the box to indicate that it is preferred, or more important, in comparison to the other. If no agreement can be reached, consult with the advice of an outsider (from another small group) or the facilitator (you) until a choice can be made between the two options.
7. Repeat these paired comparisons in the small groups until all open boxes have been filled in with the selected threats.
8. Once the table is filled in, on a separate sheet of paper list down all of the threats/problems considered and the total number of times each was chosen within the table (the score).
9. Once this has been done, rank the problem/threat from highest to lowest in terms of their scores (number of times it was chosen). Take the results from each group to the larger group for discussion and possibly agreement



PLA Watershed Outreach in Nu’uuli 2010—AOG youth group

Tool 9: STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The community identifies the major stakeholders that are currently involved, their roles and how important they are and how they relate.

Objective:

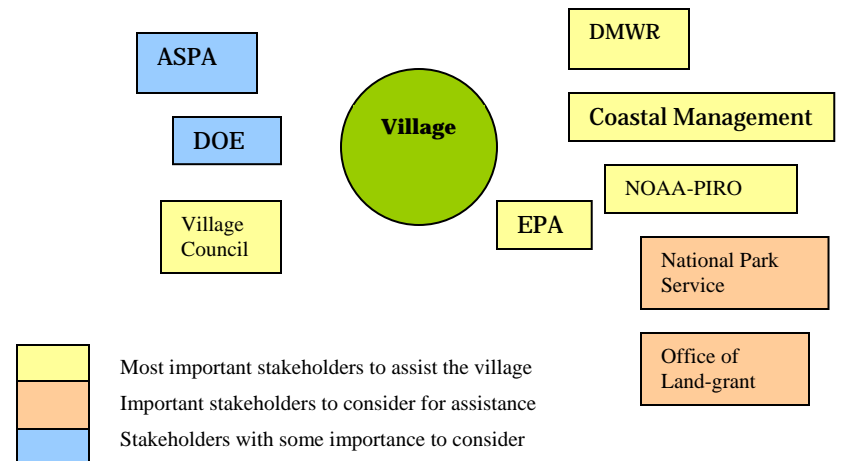
- To identify the important stakeholders and how they relate in order to provide the basis for discussions on who can be involved in putting plans into action and where relations could be improved.

Methods and Activity:

1. Participants split into groups and brainstorm a list of possible stakeholders
2. Discuss the relative importance of each stakeholder to the community or the management of the resources. Based on this cut out a circle of paper or card proportional to the importance of the stakeholder and label it. The bigger the circle the more important the stakeholder.
3. Position the circles on butcher paper where the centre represents the community making sure that the distance of the circles from the centre reflects the amount of interaction that the stakeholder has with the community. Nearer is more interaction.

* Color sticky pads could also be used.

Example of Stakeholder Analysis from a Community PLA Workshop:



Tool 10: ACTION PLANNING MATRIX

This is the most important tool and also an easy one to work on. It includes the outcomes and implications identified by the community for implementation and management.

Objectives:

- To develop a list of tasks or actions that needs to be carried out to achieve the objectives and goals;
- To develop a plan that will assist the target group or a community on what actions they need to take, how they implement the actions, the partners or stakeholders to assist, and when would be the best time for implementation to best address the prioritize issues.

Methods and Activity:

1. Divide participants into small groups. You may keep the same groups from the previous PLA tool exercises.
2. From the prioritized problems and threats, assign one or more problems/threats to each group.
3. Ask each group to discuss the threats assigned to them, using the information gathered from the other tools, write on the matrix the appropriate actions done (if any), actions, stakeholders and timeframe or dates when the task is expected to be completed.
4. Allow more time for each group to discuss and complete the matrix using information gathered from the previous PLA tool exercises.

Prioritized Problems	What has been done	Proposed Actions	Stakeholders	Timeframe

Tool 11: SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT stands for **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats**. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors. Opportunities and threats are **external** factors.

Objective

- To better leverage the strengths, correct weaknesses, capitalize on golden opportunities, and deter potentially devastating threats.

Simple rules for successful SWOT analysis:

- Be realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of your organization when conducting **SWOT** analysis.
- SWOT analysis should distinguish between where your organization is today, and where it could be in the future.
- SWOT should always be specific. Avoid grey areas.
- Always apply SWOT in relation to your competition i.e. better than or worse than your competition.
- Keep your SWOT short and simple. Avoid complexity and over analysis
- SWOT is subjective.

Example of SWOT Matrix for village health clinic:

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceptions of quality services Good location of health clinic for community Support from community 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building is very small ● Lack of motivation in staff
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support of local government ● Support of local community 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low salaries ● Bad roads ● Lack of budget

XI. From PLA to Next Steps

Analysis of PLA findings

After the PLA workshop, the information gathered should be analyzed in detail to assure that it is consistent and correspond with the workshop goal and objectives. This is usually done by the organizer of the PLA workshop. Since every PLA workshop is unique, there are certain guidelines that can be followed when analyzing the PLA information.

Guidelines:

- Get an overall background of the target group or community;
- Check the PLA workshop objectives and relate the information gathered to draw conclusions;
- Do not make any assumptions about issues you are not clear on;
- Prepare a draft report in a simple local language that can be reviewed by a representative of the target group or community;
- Finalize report with photographs added and prepared a translation version for the target group or community.

Follow-up

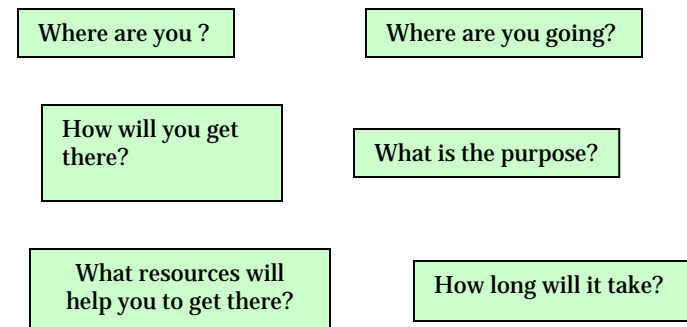
Once the final report has been completed, the results and recommendations should be presented back to the community for further discussion and development of follow-up activities. The actions that were purposed and recommended in the PLA action plan are the ideal follow-up activities to assist the communities in getting to their vision and management goals. It is a primary goal of the PLA approach to encourage the community to have a clear understanding of their environment and issues in order to build and recommend activities or projects from their own interests and needs.

The PLA action plan is a guiding framework that can help the community in developing pilot projects to improve resource management and to provide information on who should assist and when the implementation of activities will occur or ended.

Management Plan

The information gathered from the PLA tools and exercises, especially from the Action Plan Matrix, can be used to formulate or revise a management plan. A management plan will ensure continuity of management over a long timescale, so that incoming staff understand the long term vision for an area and continue to manage appropriately. It builds relationships between people and their environments, by bringing them together to make management decisions, and thus ensuring ownership of those decisions. It also generate public awareness about the problems and opportunities that an area offers, and attracting political support and funding. Moreover, it relates the site or area to the wider ecological and/or social context.

The following are some of the basic questions ask in developing a management plan:



Management Plans – Setting Objectives

A management plan will not be productive and effective until it has good goals and objectives. Setting goals and objectives provides support and aid in their achievement. The most well known method for setting objectives is the **S.M.A.R.T.** way, the SMART approach is well understood amongst managers, but is poorly practiced.

S.M.A.R.T refers to the acronym that describes the key characteristics of meaningful objectives, which are **Specific** (concrete, detailed, well defined), **Measureable** (numbers, quantity, comparison), **Achievable** (feasible, actionable), **Realistic** (considering resources) and **Time-Bound** (a defined time line).

SMART

- Specific – they should relate to particular features (such as species, landscape features, habitats, cultural or historical interests) or to particular land use practices
- Measurable – they should be quantified (in terms, for example, of numbers of breeding birds, robustness of work, extent and size of forest cover, amount of use of natural resources)
- Achievable – what is proposed should be realistic, given the constraints of the area or site and the available resources
- Relevant – to the overall aims of management
- Timetable – a time limit should be set, by which time each object should be met

Who will use the management plans

Management plans need to be clear, logical, achievable and practical in order to have effective implementation and management. Once it has been developed and approved, the plan will be used by any organization, individual or institution that has interest in the management area.

Examples of “who” will be using the management plans:

- Partners
- The public
- Funding Agencies
- Managers, Planners
- Local/Regional/National Leaders
- You and Others

References

1. Aalbersberg, William, Govan, Hugh, Parks, John E., Tawake, Alafareti. 2008. **LMMA Guidebook: A guide to coastal managers and conservation Practitioners.**
2. Community Involvement website: www.communityinvolvement.org
3. **Community-based Wetland Management Plan for Tula** (draft). 2008. Tula village and DOC-Coastal Management Program, American Samoa. Community-based Wetland Management Project.
4. Dipper, S and Hunnam, P(editors). 1996. **Community Resource Conservation and Development: A tool kit for Community-based Conservation and Sustainable development in the Pacific.** WWF-South Pacific Program, Suva, Fiji.
5. Ecowomen. (2000). **Participatory Learning and Action: A Trainer's Guide for the South Pacific.** SPACHEE. Suva, Fiji.
6. Pretty, J.N., Guijt, I., Thompson, J., Scoones, I. (1995) **Participatory Learning and Action – A Trainers Guide**, IIED Participatory Methodology Series.
7. Sauafea-Le'au, Fatima and Tuamu, Solialofi. 2008. Participatory, Learning and Action Community Workshop in Tula and Vatia villages. Notes for the PLA Community-based Wetland Workshops. CRCP Participatory, Learning and Action project.
8. Sauafea-Le'au, Fatima. 2006. Participatory, Learning and Action Community Workshop in MPA villages. Notes for the PLA MPA community workshops. CRCP Participatory, Learning and Action project.
9. Siar, Susana, Maragos, James, Walters, Jeffery S., White, Alan T. 1998. **Participatory Coastal Resource Assessment.** A Handbook for Community Workers and Coastal Resource Managers. Silliman University.
10. USP/ICPL/SPREP. (2001) **Pacific Islands Community Based Conservation Training Notes.** University of the South Pacific (USP). Fiji.