

SAMOA

Community Based Adaptation for Lelepa Village

Grantee: Lelepa Village

Type of organization: NGO

Number of participants: 217

Location: Fasitootai and Vailuutai, Samoa

CBA Contribution: \$50,000 USD

Project Partners: AusAID

Co-financing: AusAID V&A Project

Project Dates: August 2009 – August 2011

BACKGROUND

The Community-Based Adaptation Programme (CBA) is a five-year **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** global initiative funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is the delivery mechanism. The UN Volunteers partners with UNDP and GEF/SGP to enhance community mobilization, recognize volunteers' contribution and ensure inclusive participation around the project, as well as to facilitate capacity building of partner NGOs and CBOs. In addition, funding is provided by the Government of Japan, the Government of Switzerland, and AusAID. The CBA's goal is to strengthen the resiliency of communities to adverse climate change impacts.

The CBA project "Community-Based Adaptation for Lelepa Village" focuses on reducing the vulnerability to climate change for the Lelepa Village community and the ecosystems on which they rely for their living. Samoa is an archipelago in the South Pacific composed of two large mountainous islands, Upolu and Savai'i. The majority of Samoa's population, of 180,000 people live within one kilometer of the coast. Its economy relies heavily on natural resource-dependent industries, such as ecotourism and agriculture. Like most South Pacific islands, Samoa is extremely vulnerable to climate change, particularly to sea-level rise and extreme events such as cyclones. Lelepa village is located north of the island of Savaii with a population of 217. The village is located on low-lying coral sand beach, and backyard to a disturbed herbaceous marshland. Up-hill, behind the marshlands, are family "plantations" cultivated for subsistence food usage. The village is connected to vital services such as water, telecommunication, electricity and the rest of the island through the tar sealed main coast road which is entirely within the coastal and flood hazard zone areas. Going inland, away from the sea, is a dirt road which is now being settled by many villagers who re-located from the coastal hazard zone. The land adjacent to the dirt road is used for residential and agricultural purposes. Agriculture is vulnerable to flooding when marshes behind residents homes overflows. Additionally, the flooding makes the dirt road impassable, taking away its other main purpose of being an emergency escape route for people to reach higher or elevated grounds during flooding.



Leftover poles from old residential buildings. Indicator of where people use to live and hence evidently indicate that the coast line have since moved inland. Photo dated 02 May 2009

CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS

Lelepa has a similar climate as the rest of the Samoa, which is marked by two seasons: wet and warm from the months of November thru April and drier and cooler from May thru October. The village is susceptible to high risks of hurricane occurrences in between the wet season (particularly between December and February). Three of the most severe cyclones that occurred recently were Ofa in 1990, Val in 1991 and Heta in 2004. With the wind damage and tidal surges of high magnitude, these cyclones wreaked havoc along the coastal areas of Samoa, including Lelepa. Flooding, which usually is a counterpart of cyclones, is now a common hazard and risk particularly during the wet season due to heavy rainfall that occur in increased frequencies. Exposure to drought is high during the dry season resulting in major fire risks. The recent regular occurrence of long dry spells is presumed to be a reflection of the impact of the El Nino Southern Oscillation phenomenon intensified by climate change.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ADAPTATION SOLUTIONS

This project aims to strengthen the resilience of the Lelepa Village community by reducing the impacts of climate change-driven flooding and coastal erosion through various adaptation strategies.

Through a participatory approach, specific activities to support the adaptation measures include:

- Implementation of village clean-up programs to clean out waste materials dumped in the wetlands and clear outlets and inlets to allow natural flow of wetland water.
- Strict prohibition of waste disposal with punishable terms can be imposed on by the village of Lelepa's part of a Natural Resources Management Plan
- Elevation of work roads to a safe and passable level including upgrading activities such as: the proper installation of drains and culverts at the wetland crossing to allow free flow of water.
- Strengthening of coastal defenses by rehabilitating and re-vegetating the coast line. The buffer zones provided by these vegetation will reduce coastal erosion and siltation of coral reefs
- Execution of regular coastal clean-up activities
- Reconstruction of protective walls around the village pool. Pool water can be used for bathing and washing and under critical water shortage conditions are often filtered and boiled by villagers to use as drinking water
- Engaging of community members in awareness raising programs focusing on climate change risks and adaptation options



Work Road significantly affected by wetland flooding

FOCUS ON...

Global Environmental Benefits

Rehabilitation of the coast lines while planting vegetation to act as buffer zones lead to environmental benefits as coastal erosion and coral reef siltation is decreased. Simultaneously, integrating wetland clean-up and upgrading programs into the Lelepa's Natural Resources Management Plan, allows the natural flow of water into the island using sustainable practices.

Community Ownership and Sustainability

A community participatory approach is used from the project development to project implementation. A project monitoring plan engaging all community members is also developed to capture all local assessments. To ensure sustainable ownership of the project at the community level, the project supports the local community coordinating committee to clarify project boundaries, review and check through log frame or planned activities of the project.

A Community Perspective: Faaiuga Faamoetauloo, 38 years old, Lelepa

How do you participate in the project? What is your role?

In participation of our project, my role is with the Womens Council where we work together with the Council of Chiefs to implement and plan our project works. We have our own roles of what we can do to assist with the overall project, eg clean and clear project site and cooking the food to feed the men when they complete their labour. My role right now is in the Project Committee and working together with committee on Progress Reports and advising the chiefs on project issues. I also help out with my elderly father who is the Lelepa village Mayor with project issues

Policy Influence

The lessons learned from this project will be disseminated and upscaled in local and regional policies

For more information about CBA or CBA projects visit: www.undp-adaptation.org/project/cba

Further information, lessons learned, and experiences gathered from climate change adaptation activities globally can be found at the Adaptation Learning Mechanism: www.adaptationlearning.net

