

Income generating Activities Training Workshop for SPBCP-supported Conservation Areas Apia, Samoa, 13 to 24 July 1998

1. Introduction

This regional workshop was held at the SBEC Training Room, Apia, Samoa, from July 13th to 24th, 1998. The eighteen participants who attended the workshop came from Palau, Cook Island, Tuvalu, Niue, Solomon Island, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tonga, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Samoa. The opening remarks were given by the Officer-in-Charge of UNDP Mr. Richard Olver and the Director of SPREP, Mr Tamarii Tutangata and the keynote address and official opening by the Hon. Minister of Lands, Survey & Environment, Tuala Tagaloa Kerslake. The workshop was officially closed by the Chairman of the SBEC Board, H.E. Peter Hamilton and the certificates presented by Mr. François Martel, on behalf of SPREP.

2. Workshop Objectives

Objectives and learning outcomes are provided in the Terms of Reference shown in **Attachment 1**. They can be summarised as follows:

- To provide business training for key project management personnel so that they can impart their knowledge to selected small CAP entrepreneurs to further improve their business management skills and performances.
- To enable participants to conduct an assessment of the feasibility of a range of natural resource-based income generating activities, identify one or more that are particularly suitable in the specific context of their Conservation Area.
- To assist those in their community who are interested to plan and establish such business ventures, and to plan them profitably within the economic, social and environmental constraints of a rural village in a Pacific island country.
- To train other members of their Conservation Area management team and key members of their communities to provide similar services.

3. Programme Contents

The programme covered the following topics:

Day 1

What is business
Business in the Pacific Cultural Context
Why business Fail

Advantages and disadvantages of self employment
Conflicts between culture and business
Characteristics of a successful entrepreneur

Day 2

Look at New business Ideas
Identify your won skills
Identify opportunities with a focus on natural resource-based ventures

Day 3

Assessing the Market
Ways of Getting started
Law and the Small Business
Planning your Money

Day 4

Planning your Business
Putting It all Together: The Business Plan

Day 5

Keeping things under Control
Building your sales

Day 6

Group Case Studies - Field Visit to Uafato Conservation Area

Day 8

Findings & Recommendation on Uafato Conservation Area
Developing a SWOT Analysis for small eco-enterprises and individual projects

Day 9

Overview of the Biodiversity Conservation Network
Case- Experience in Samoa
Selection of Case Studies

Day 10

Group Case Studies on Selected enterprises - Group work

Day 11

Group Presentation

Day 12

Panel of Assessors Critics and Findings

Presentation of Certificates

Evaluation

Closing

Details of the daily programme are in **Attachment 2**.

4. *Coordination and Logistical Support*

The project was jointly co-ordinated by SBEC and SPREP staff. SPREP was mainly involved in the organising of the administrative travel and accommodation components while SBEC provided the actual training component of the project. The organiser was Mr. François Martel of SPREP while the training coordinator was Lemalu Nele Leilua of SBEC. The overall organisation went very well perhaps due to the regular communication and contracts made especially in the planning stage where a thorough plan of action enabled each party to carry out their functions effectively as required.

5. *Participants*

The programme was designed for Conservation Area Support Officer or CASO and/or members of the Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (CACC) who were initiators, advisors, and/or assistants in business development within their own communities (community officers). The programme stressed not only gaining competent basic business management skills but also the ability to provide advice, assistance and encouragement to those in their community who wish to set up or expand business ventures. A full list of participants to the workshop is provided in **Attachment 3**.

6. *Pre-Workshop Package*

A pre-workshop package including all information related to the workshop and preparatory work in the form of a case-study was sent out to all participants. The core of the Pre-workshop Package is presented in **Attachment 4** (less the provisional agenda). Out of 18 participants, only six case studies were received which included the following:

- Eco-tourism (Beach houses for tourism in Ha'apai, Tonga),
- Eco-tourism (Wilderness and landscapes in Ngaremeduu, Palau),
- Sa'anapu Adventure Tours (mangroves, beaches, wilderness in Sa'anapu, Samoa),
- Handicraft production (pandanus, coconut tree) in Niue,
- Coconut Oil Production in Niue,
- Eco-tourism in Takitumu CA.

A summary and evaluation of these case-studies are presented in **Attachment 5**. Four cases were selected for the practical studies to be undertaken during the workshop. The Group Work aimed at developing a business plan using the information collected from the feasibility studies and applying the relevant business and environmental concepts learned from the workshop.

7. *Resource-Persons*

A very experienced and knowledgeable pool of resource persons were selected from a wide cross section of the business and environmental community and allocated topics which suited their area of expertise. The full list of resource persons with their brief profile are in **Attachment 6**.

8. *Programme Structure and Method*

The workshop-type approach involved active participation through small group discussions of key issues, individual exercises, panel discussions and presentations. The group was challenged to assess the relevance and applicability of key concepts discussed to their work situations, identify income generating activities in their work situations, identify income generating activities in their conservation areas, and culminating in the formulation of a business plan.

The resource persons and facilitators used a combination of lectures, individual and group exercises, simplified training handouts, review of previous days work and group presentation to enhance the effectiveness of the participants' learning experience. The SBEC used and adapted material from the Pacific Start-Your Business (SYB) series of manuals prepared by ILO Consultants under the South Pacific Regional Small Enterprise Development Program (RAS/92/306) funded by UNDP.

9. *Exercises and Case-studies*

Nine written exercises were completed by the participants. These exercises covered the following areas:

- a) Why do small business fail? Identifying reasons. Discussions was held on identifying the advantages and disadvantage of self enterprises.
- b) Writing up a check list of things to consider when assessing a potential opportunity for income-generating activities in a project.
- c) Planning Your Money - Preparation of Cash Flow and other Accounting Equations
Heilala Huts Case Study
- d) Planning your Business - Setting Aims & Objectives, and listing down Activities for your Business using the Heilala Huts Case Study
- e) Preparations of Business Plan - taking into consideration the previous exercises.

- f) SWOT Analysis of Heilala Huts
- g) Keeping Things Under Control - what are some of the things that we need to keep under control?
- h) Framework on Situation Analysis for small eco-enterprises and their individual projects.
- i) Participants preparing a Situation Analysis and categorise them into 5 sections: Technical, financial, social & Cultural, legal and Environmental.

10. *Field Trip to Uafato Conservation Area*

A field trip for the workshop participants and group coordinators was organised to observe the Uafato Conservation Area, and to identify some income generating activities. A field manual (part of which is presented in **Attachment 7**) was prepared and distributed to participants providing background information and material for the field trip to Uafato. The objective of the field trip was to use the opportunity to assist the CACC and the Uafato CASO in identifying income generating activities for the project while applying the principles learned in the training course. The findings and recommendations made by the participants on the Uafato Conservation Area following the field trip are presented in **Attachment 8**.

11. *Group Work and Case Presentation*

During the last part of the workshop, participants were divided into four groups of four and five members. The composition was quite balanced in terms of experience and knowledge such that an equal input from all members was anticipated and achieved.

A panel of three assessors convened to evaluate the presentation of each group business plan. The panel comprised Mr. Lamositele Leota Sio, Director of SBEC, Mr. Samuelu Sesega of SPREP, and Mr. Rudy Meredith, Assistant General Manager, Loans Operations, Development Bank of Samoa.

Groups verbally presented their summary of the business plans to the assessors and forwarded a full written report to re-enforce their case findings. The assessors made their oral evaluation of each case and allocated scores to each of the major sections of the business plan according to content and presentation.

Given the time constraint, the assessors generally agreed that the groups had successfully achieved the purpose of the exercise as indicated by the satisfactory grades allocated to each group. The points were out of 100 and an average of 75% was achieved by the top group and 55% by the lowest group. One of the four business plans developed by participants (Sunset Beach Fale: A Business Proposal), as presented to the Panel of Assessors, is presented in **Attachment 9**.

12. *Participants Evaluation of the Programme*

12.1 Approach and questionnaires

The participants evaluated all aspects of the training workshop programme including travel, logistics, administration, field trip, course contents, presentation by resource persons, case study work and presentation, and suggestions for improvement. An evaluation was carried out at the end of the first week so that participants could easily recall activities to that point. A final evaluation was made after the second and last week covering activities of the second week and an overall view of the two-week workshop. The forms used are shown in **Attachment 10**.

The table below summarises the participants evaluation of certain aspects of the workshop on a satisfaction scale of low/poor, medium/average, high/excellent. Their ratings and comments on the criteria assessed are summarised in Table 1.

12.3 Key features of the evaluation

Logistics

While about 50% felt that there was not enough notice on the workshop, 75% also thought that there was not enough information on the workshop. These responses may be related to the time between the notices were sent and the time the workshop started which was about three weeks. Given the wide geographical spread of the island countries and their preparations required for the workshop, this may have been the reason for the responses.

About 90% of the participants felt that accommodation was satisfactory and 50% viewed travel arrangements as unsatisfactory. Perhaps the concerns here were due to power and water problems experienced by Ah Kam's hotel earlier in the first week and the late arrival of PTAs to participants with difficult connections to Samoa such as the FSM, Palau, Kiribati and Tuvalu members. The problem with Ah Kam's hotel was corrected immediately and all went well through out the rest of the two week period.

The workshop venue was given a satisfactory rating from 75% of the participants.

Relevance of topics

All responded that the topics were quite relevant and felt that they were in a position to prepare a business plan for their clients/community groups and that the structure in terms of topics and activities were well linked. This co-relates well with the overall views of the assessors mentioned earlier on the understanding of the groups in the preparations of a business plan.

Table 1 - Participants Evaluation

Evaluation by number of participants

Topics under evaluation	Low/Poor	Medium /Average	High/Excellent	N/A
a. Is your accommodation	1	11	2	2
b. Are the sessions	7 too long	6	2 too short	1
c. Is the workshop venue	3 too formal	12		1
d. Style of Presentation	3 too formal 1 too informal	12		1
e. Enough notice on workshop	7 no	8 yes		1 didn't
f. Enough information about the workshop	10 no	5 yes		1 didn't
g. Structure of workshop	2 not well linked	13 well linked		1
h. Length of workshop	2 too long 6 too short	8 just right		
i. Level of the Workshop	3 too advanced	13 just right		
j. What did you like most about the field trip?		11 visit to waterfall 7 visit to Ifilele 11 handicraft demo		
k. Were the travel arrangements (itineraries, tickets) satisfactory?	5 no	5 yes		
l. How satisfied were you with the outcome of the workshop?	2 ok	8 quite satisfied	7 very satisfied	
m. How useful were the group work to you?	2 ok	4 quite useful	10 very useful	
n. How do you rate the group co-ordinators? Group 1 Group 2 Group 3 Group 4	1 4 1		3 4 3	
o. Did you enjoy the cultural night?	4 no	12 yes		
p. Were the topics relevant to your work back home		8 relevant	9 very relevant	
q. Will you be able to prepare a simple business plan for your CA when you return home?	2 don't know 3 no	11 yes		

Field Trip

All gave a positive feedback on the field trip in all its aspects and Mr. Dion Ale is to be commended for his preparations in ensuring that the village was well informed and ready for the visit. The various income generating activities in which the community is involved in compared to the difficulties they face posed a challenge to the participants and a learning experience for them to take home.

Other Factors

The length and participation level were just about right and the popularity of the cultural night suggests this social event enabled the participants to familiarise themselves and share something of their cultural experiences which is important to the nature of their work.

12.4 Contents of training workshop

The contents of each topic were evaluated on a satisfaction scale detailed as follows:

1 = excellent, 2 = very good, 3 = good, 4 = fair, 5 = poor

The results of the evaluation by number of participants is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Evaluation of topics presented at the workshop

Evaluation by number of participants

Training topic and activities	1	2	3	4	5
• What is business	6	4	3		
• Why small business fail	7	5	2	1	
• Conflicts between culture and business	6	4	2	2	
• Characteristics of a successful entrepreneur	3	5	2	1	3
• Identify opportunities for eco-ventures	5	7	1	3	
• Assessing the market	11	3			1
• Ways of getting started	7	3			
• Law and small business	4	3	2	4	2
• Planning your money	7	4	2	2	
• Planning your business	10	2	1		1
• Business Plan	9	3	1		2
• Keeping things under control	10	3		1	1
• Building your sales	1	8	3	2	1
• Brainstorming session on Uafato CA	2	2	2		
• SWOT Analysis for small eco-enterprises	6	7	2	1	
• SWOT Analysis on particular projects	9	5	2		
• Eco-Enterprises: management structures	5	6	4	1	
• Eco-Tourism in Vatthe CA, Vanuatu	5	8	3		
• Nature tourism: the case of Samoa	5	6	5		

Although the reception to the contents to the topics were generally very good, some topics were given a poor reception by two or three such as in characteristics of a successful entrepreneur, law and small business plan. The main reasons may be due to the preparation and the presentation approach which will be taken note of in future.

12.5 Written Comments on Most and Least Important Topics

On Most Important Topics/Issues.

- a. "All issues are important but some of us may not have the interest to start a business. It will be a good benefit for the community income generating projects, so I guess its fair; being a CA, area of work is not the same with office work when dealing with the above issues"
- b. "All are important topics when dealing with income generating activities. Why I think it's important to me is understanding all the structures of business plan, budgeting and marketing"
- c. "Before going into business you should know what business is. It is important to know why business fail in order to avoid or prevent from failing. Since all our income-generating income activities are to be based on the rural areas, it is important to be aware of the culture interaction of business"
- d. "Business Planning - very important because that is where you know where you're going"
- e. "In the business context you can apply this with almost everything you do in you're life, so it is important that when you learn these steps to run your business, you can be all better off with your work, family and any other task that you do"
- f. "It is important to identify opportunities from natural based ventures because once SPREP funding gets exhausted, then we must have ways to sustain the project"
- g. "It is important to assess the market because we do not want to get into the business blinded about the importance of our customers to know what our market is like, we can be sure how to run our business well"
- h. "It is important to plan our business because this will help us run our business well and to avoid problems caused by not having a proper plan"
- i. "Business plan guides us in running our business. Good business plans lead to a successful business"
- j. "It is essential to understand fundamental factors in business experience"
- k. "It is important because it gives us a clear idea of how a business operates taking into consideration other factors. It also gives me a brief idea of business planning and the proper utilisation of natural resources into income generating activities"
- l. "Why business fail: I think this is the most important topic because it has been explaining why business fail. It is important to learn from this because it is all business

vision to be success therefore learning and knowing why business fail is very important to business”

- m. “The CA I am currently working on has great potential for eco-tourism but skills and knowledge in the communities are not available. Therefore all topics related to new business or starting a business received ranking 1 and 2”
- n. “Sometimes I don’t really understand some of the things being said”
- o. “All of the above are very essential for a successful business”
- q. “Without these above stated reason, you will not be able to start or make successful business”

The comments above again reflects the importance placed by the participants on the contents of the course. In summary, the general view is that all topics are of importance with the preparation of the business plan as the most important. Perhaps this course may require participants who have at least successfully completed secondary school so that they are able to grasp the concepts. It may mean that if this will be an additional responsibility for the CASO’s, then perhaps an academic requirement for employment would be the successful completion of Year 12 or Form Five.

On least important topics/issues

- a. “The concept of entrepreneur - one does not need to be a successful entrepreneur in order to run a business”
- b. “Already knows different types of business”
- c. “Characteristics of a successful entrepreneur and law and small business are complicated”
- d. Assessing management.

The comments appear to be isolated as they are all different with no particular pattern. There is however a correlation between the comments made on the entrepreneur and contents of this topic and in this case it may be due to the delivery by the resource-person.

12.6 Presentation of Training Workshop Topics

The presentations of each topic were evaluated on a satisfaction scale detailed as follows:

1 = very well 2 = well 3 = not very well

The results of the first week evaluation by number of participants is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Evaluation of presentations by resource-persons

Evaluation by number of participants

Training topic and activities	1	2	3
• What is business	9	6	
• Why small business fail	8	7	
• Conflicts between culture and business	8	6	1
• characteristics of a successful entrepreneurs	3	7	5
• Identifying opportunities for eco-ventures	10	4	1
• Assessing the Market	14		1
• Ways of getting started	7	5	3
• Law and small business	3	8	4
• Planning your money	9	5	1
• Planning your business	10	4	1
• Business planning	9	5	1
• Keeping things under control	12	2	1
• Building your sales	8	4	3

While the results indicate that all of the topics were well presented, four topics need improvement on presentation namely: (1) Characteristics of a successful entrepreneur, (2) Ways of getting started, (3) Law and Small Business and (4) Building your sales. This will be addressed in future courses of this nature. Related to this however is again the disparity in know-how amongst participants which may contribute to the results.

Suggestions on improvement of presentation

- “Use of other supporting mediums”
- “Keep it short and simple”
- “Use simple English to facilitate better understanding, especially for those who have no knowledge of business”
- “The resource persons approach should be modified and may be get the right people who are good trainers and would be able to modify their materials within the given time”
- “Ways of getting started - make it short”

It should be noted however that some of the topics were quite technical in nature and it could be difficult for the resource-person to compromise the approach and terms used for the sake of simplicity and thereby losing substance.

12.7 Other Comments made by participants on Training Workshop

- a. “Packages need to be sent to participants well before time to allow them time for projects”
- b. “Not enough time - should be extended for future workshops to allow participants to fully grasp the content of the workshop”
- c. “More time needed on Business Planning”
- d. “First week was excellent. Resource-persons have great experience and techniques that is suitable for a mixture of people, level, education and experience from participants”
- e. “Give enough time on the first day to visit the Bank”
- f. “Local participants to receive allowances”
- g. “This workshop should have a follow-up to ensure participants competencies”
- h. “Highly commented on the organisation of the workshop, especially in identifying the resource persons”
- i. “The workshop has broaden my business knowledge and definitely, it will help with my work with the project back home. Last but not least, thank you very much for everything, the Samoan community for their support and assistance rendered while here for 14 days”
- j. “Remember the ‘kiss’ rule; the workshop was very good, but too advanced”
- k. “Overall, the workshop was very fruitful and productive to the CA and proposed business. I would like to suggest follow up workshop to see how each CASO apply what has been learned in their respective CA”
- l. “As a participant to this workshop, I would like to express my appreciation and thank you to SPREP, SBEC, UNDP and all others who organised and co-ordinated the workshop. I look forward to continue working with you all to protect the valuable resources within our countries”
- m. “The resource-persons should consider the level of education of the participants with similar backgrounds for future workshops”
- n. “If the workshop is going to be very intensive; it is wise not to have too much pre-arranged parties”
- o. “Allow more time for participants to do shopping during the day”
- p. “The content of the workshop should be practical orientated rather than more theoretical”
- q. “More time should be given to business planning preparation; words used can be simplified”
- r. “The workshop was well designed and as well as the resource persons were great - know what they were talking about in their respective areas of the sessions”
- s. “Reduce emphasis on business aspect and related topics on conservation area, at least link them both in all the topics”.

These other comments sum up the different views of the participants on various aspects of the workshop from its logistics, administration and actual training to social. Some as previously pointed out are isolated and a number of comments also focused on time constraints. At times it is difficult to accommodate the individual wishes of everyone and some compromise are required given other constraints faced when projects of this nature are implemented. Generally, most of the comments are positive which is again an indication of the overall satisfaction of the participants on the workshop.

13. Conclusion

On the whole the workshop went very well considering that this was the first workshop of the kind co-ordinated by SBEC and SPREP. The course content was well received by participants, whom also responded well to the exercises and discussions. Although there were a few participants who found it very hard to keep up with the pace, efforts were made to simplify the training material and contents without compromising on the course contents. SBEC considers that the majority of participants have achieved a reasonable level of proficiency in small business planning and most learning outcomes have been achieved.

The workshop provided opportunities for all participants to apply and practice what they had learned to their individual projects and identifying other income generating activities in their respective conservation areas. The situation analysis enabled them to identify strengths and weaknesses pertaining to their projects and identify external threats and opportunities affecting their projects. This analysis using the business tools learned from the workshop should enable them to devise various types of business plans for potential ventures in their respective conservation areas.