OVERVIEW OF COASTAL - COMMUNITY BASED FISHERIES IN TONGA
Coastal Fisheries
Background

1. Subsistence fishing (home consumption)
2. Small-scale commercial fishing (local markets)
   - Plays a major role in the daily livelihoods of communities, particularly rural and island communities
• Local communities primarily rely on fisheries resources for their livelihood.

• However, they are aware of the degraded state of their inshore resources but feel powerless and unable to do anything about it.
Fisheries Management Act 2002

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Forestry & Fisheries (through the Fisheries Department) is responsible for fisheries management in Tonga

- Communities may also be given the opportunity to actively take part in managing their inshore marine resources
Coastal community managed SMA

SMA can be allocated by the Minister to a designated coastal community for the purpose of community-based fisheries management, where:

• The coastal community takes an active role in managing their coastal fisheries resources, with assistance from the Fisheries Division.
Legal Instruments in place

- Fisheries Management Act 2002
- Fisheries Management (Conservation) Regulations 2008
- Fisheries (Coastal Communities) Regulations 2009
- Special Management Order
Summary of SMA Process

• Initial request by the community
• Development of CCMC and management plan
• Presentation of plan back to the community for confirmation/as well as to the Fisheries Dept.
• Public Consultation with adjacent villages (28 days)
• Presentation of plan to the Fisheries Management Advisory Committee (FMAC)
• Ministerial decision on plan
• If approved, gazettal notice and regulations imposed
• Public announcement
• Implementation of plan
Management Plan Process

Request

Assess interest & Awareness Raising

Implementation

Planning

Monitoring

Assessment

Adaptive management
Map of Tonga

- 4 main island groups
- 170 islands
- ~60 islands inhabited
- Main island is Tongatapu with the capital Nuku’alofa
- Fisheries Dept offices based at each island group: main office in Nuku’alofa

Samoa is right next door
Typical remote island communities

- Remote and coastal
- In most cases: one island, one village
- Surrounded by its own reef system
- High level of fishing activities occurring in their inshore area (from both locals and outsiders)
- Face the major concern of deteriorating inshore resources and feel the urge to manage them wisely
• Land can either belong to the King, a noble of the village or government
• Sea belongs to the government
• The village is run by a town officer (nominated through election)
• The village also belongs to a district (a group of villages (islands)) which is then run by a district officer (also nominated through election)
• Currently working with 9 villages (remote island communities)
Vava’u Group (1)

Ovaka Island
16km

Neiafu
Ha’apai Group (3)

- Ha’afeva Island: 41 km
- ‘O’ua Island: 42 km
- Felemea (‘Uiha Island): 14 km
New Established SMAs includes the following:

(1) *Nomuka* in Ha’apai
(2) *Taunga* in Vava’u and
(3) *Fafa Resort* in Tongatapu
Coastal Community Management Committee (CCMC)

- Members are chosen in a public fono (village meeting)
- Members must include the town officer, district officer and a representative from the Fisheries Department (normally from the Fisheries office in that region)
- Members must also include representatives from fishermen, women and youth groups
- May also include other relevant stakeholders if needed
Coastal Community Management Plan (Planning)

• The community (through the CCMC) is responsible for developing a Coastal Community Management Plan
• Preparation of the management plan is facilitated by the Fisheries Division, who also provide technical and legal advice
• This involves a series of workshops and meetings with the CCMC and focus groups
• Also enhances skills development and capacity building within the community in preparation for their leading management role of their coastal area
• Solutions identified are detailed into an Action Plan (management measures)
Assessment Activities

• Involves a series of workshops/activities conducted by the community and CCMC:
  – Trend analysis: an assessment of the changes in the fishing situation and status of inshore resources based on community knowledge
  – Problem analysis: an assessment of prioritized issues occurring in their inshore area, their causes and effects
  – Solution analysis: an assessment of possible solutions (management strategies) to solve these issues
Community Fisheries Management Measures: SMA boundary guidelines

- Shall be measured seaward from the high-tide mark of a coastal community extending to a maximum depth of 50m.
- Should include a cross-section of inshore habitats.
  - Shall be clearly defined and demarcated.
  - The community must be able to manage / enforce the area (management plan and commitment).
  - Zoning (spatial closures): could be divided into different areas for specific objectives.
Fish Habitat Reserve ("Tapu" area)

- An area where strictly NO FISHING is permitted to ANYONE ("tapu" area / "no-take" zone)
- Each community is willing to set aside such an area to protect fish and their habitat so they may grow and breed undisturbed in a healthy marine environment
- ~15% of the SMA area
Fisheries Management Tools

• Limiting fishers
• Limiting fishing gear
• Size limits
• Catch limits
• Environment conservation
Implementation activities

• Marking the boundary
• Awareness raising
• Compliance training
• Offshore fishing training
• Restocking activities
Monitoring activities

• Community monitoring
  – Community enforcement
  – Fish Catch Monitoring
  – Monitoring and maintenance of markers
  – Monitoring and maintenance of restocked clams / other resources

• Fisheries Department monitoring
  – resource / reef assessment
Adaptive management

• Regular CCMC meetings
• Capacity building for the community
• Accessing funds
• Assessment of monitoring results
• Regular review of the management plan and progress of implementation activities
Progress to date…

- 9 management plans prepared
- Four communities in Ha’apai (‘O’ua, Ha’afeva, Felemea and Nomuka) is in the implementation phase
- Two in Vava’u (Ovaka and Taunga)
- Three in the main island (‘Atata, ‘Eueiki and Fafa)
- 2 CCMP has been initiated its still on progress (Kolonga and Kotu)
- Other communities have expressed their interest (16 written)
Challenges

• There are very limited resources (funds, staff) for enforcement and conducting resource assessments and monitoring at the national level.

• At the community level, illegal fishing within SMAs and FHRs is still being reported as a common problem.

• Issues with data collection include recording errors, inconsistency and missing data although data analysis has been initiated.

• Planning and implementing activities can however be delayed due to the delayed process of securing funds and staff availability.
Common faults at National level:

• Conflict amongst fishers
• Poor community management capacity
• Poor community compliance & enforcement capacity
• Lack of alternatives livelihoods
• Lack of community long-term commitment
• Lack of public awareness
What can be done!

• Recruitment of staff to engaged with these activities
• More public awareness & education
• Strengthening community management capacity
• Compliance & enforcement training
• Secure funding sources and partnership – NGOs
• Ensure long-term ongoing engagement of the community
• Expanding the program to interested communities
MALO 'AUPITO