



Adaptation: lessons learnt from Fiji rural CCA project

**Dr Tony Weir
Pacific Centre for Environment and SD
University of the South Pacific**

**Pacific Climate Change Roundtable
Majuro, October 2009**

Adaptation principles

(UNDP *Adaptation Policy Framework*)

- *Adaptation to short-term climate variability and extreme events is included as a basis for reducing vulnerability to longer-term climate change.*
- *Adaptation policy and measures are assessed in a developmental context.*
- *Adaptation occurs at different levels in society, including the local level.*
- *Both the strategy and the process by which adaptation is implemented are equally important.*

USP Climate Change Adaptation

Project (proposed by Fiji Dept of Environment,
funded by AusAID)
2006-2009

Aim: To pilot CC adaptation in an integrated approach to exposed sectors, & internalise CC adaptation at rural communities in Fiji

Focus: Coastal Areas & Water Sector

Project manager: Leone Limalevu (PACE-SD)

Fiji Islands

Project Sites:

Druadrua

Korotasere

Bavu

Buretu

Navukailagi

Votua



Outputs sought

- Enhanced community awareness about CC impacts & adaptation
- Increased local capacity to assess & address CC impacts & adaptation at the community level.
- Climate change adaptation mainstreamed & internalised at the community level
- Discrete and **sustainable adaptation measures**
- -> cross-cutting, process-based, relatively inexpensive measures
- V&A methodology integrating other community concerns
- Write-up and dissemination of lessons learnt
- Continued 'adaptive monitoring' beyond 2009

Example 1: Buretu – Southeastern Viti Levu [River Bank Erosion & Inundation]



Actions:

- Infilling of eroded portions along the river bank
- Construction of bank protection structures using local materials
- Construction of walkways
- Planting of *vetiver* grass for bank stabilisation
- Assessment for drainage improvement works



Buretu

Planting of *vetiver* grass for bank stabilisation



Buretu

12 months later

Example 2: **Bavu** (near Nadi) [water shortages]

Actions



Improvement/installation
of rain harvesting
system

Setting up of a
pressurized reticulation
system

Rehabilitation of 'old' dam

- Rehabilitation of borehole

Lesson 1: Community involvement is essential.

- Work with communities who recognise their need and are seeking help
- Aim for participation of the whole community in planning and implementation, (may be in differentiated roles).
- Always strive for the community to own the process
- The planned activities should be in harmony with the community's work programme (timing, priorities)
- Be sensitive to the community structure and always ensure you work through it, not against it or be disruptive in any way
- “Walking the extra mile” is usually required to ensure project success
- *Patience is rewarded, haste is not.*

Lesson 2: Support from outside groups is important.

- Incorporate analysis and recommendations of experts into the project to avoid technical mistakes
- Need to co-ordinate with such organisations (e.g. PWD) from early on, and to mainstream project into their planning
- Need to co-ordinate also with local government (e.g provincial offices), traditional structures and (where active) NGOs
- Capacity building can work both ways!

Lesson 3: Share Information about climate change and adaptation.

- Climate Change Awareness needs proper planning and should also be strategic in content and focus
- Vernacular language; simple terms that people can relate to
- Climate Change awareness should be continued throughout the project, so that the whole cross section of the community have a good understanding of the issues
- Share information between similar projects and communities (e.g what worked or didn't)
- NB information is useful only to people who want to use it and have capacity to do so!

Lesson 4: Long-term monitoring, maintenance and evaluation is needed (5-10 years).

- Evaluation should begin as early as possible and not be left to the end of the project
- ‘Adaptive monitoring’ - i.e. if something’s visibly not working, do something about it! (→ need some resources beyond ‘end’ of project)

Summary

Guiding rule should be:

- *Have we done everything possible to make this project a sustainable contribution to community development?*

USP teaching on Climate Change

- Course on climate change impacts and adaptation (V&A) is now online annually (Sem. 1)
- Aimed at officials, NGO workers, community leaders, etc
- Short courses on request
- Full postgraduate diploma in climate change to be offered from 2010 (with scholarships from AusAID)
- Will include V&A plus courses on climate science, EIA, renewable energy, biodiversity, development studies, etc.



Students modelling CC impacts