



*Lessons learnt piloting
Community Approaches to
Climate Change Adaptation
in the Cook Islands*

For Cook Islands Climate Change Country Team

At the UNFCCC Expert Workshop for SIDS

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Pasha Carruthers

Climate Technical Officer



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Overview

- Our interpretation of community based adaptation approaches
- Cook Islands Experiences derived from climate change activities
 - Island Specific Vulnerability Assessments under Initial National Communications (PICCAP Project) –
 - Avatiu Coastal Flood Plain Assessment under ADB CLIMAP
 - Integrated assessment model for Aitutaki under AIACC
 - Aitutaki Pilot under CDBDAMPIC
- Best Practices Identified
 - Participatory Assessment & Implementation
- Remaining gaps, needs & concerns
- Future of Adaptation in the Cook Islands?
- Partnerships and Roles of Actors at Different Levels
- Ways UNFCCC Process can advance community based adaptation approaches



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Community Based Adaptation Approaches

- **Main Objectives**
 - achieve adaptation at the local (village/island) level
 - Reduce community vulnerability to climate related hazards through raised awareness and action
- **Use participatory approaches to planning, implementation, and monitoring**
- **Learn by doing → feed to policy → replicate?**
- ***What community (s) are we talking about?***
- ***Relevance to national policy***
- ***Role of Models/Scenarios***
- **Combination of bottom up & top down, but for adaptation to happen need to start with practical intentions**



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Cook Islands Experience – Scenario Based

- **Island Specific Vulnerability Assessments (PICCAP INC)**
 - conducted on 3 islands, Mangaia, Aitutaki, Tongareva
 - Research, field visits, consultations
 - unique aspects to vulnerability (adaptation must be local)
 - IPCC Guidelines, only to Step 5 (no adaptation assessment)
 - establishment of cc work in CI, fed other project development
- **Avatiu Flood Plain & Harbour Assessment (ADB CLIMAP)**
 - GIS Hazard mapping, modelling & scenarios
 - Engaged community through surveys, historical knowledge
 - Infrastructure & policy focus, raised cc awareness with decision makers, recommendations for risk reduction
- **Integrated Model Aitutaki Drought Indices (AIACC)**
 - Community survey reflected increased awareness of CC



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Aitutaki Community Adaptation Pilot (CBDAMPIC)

- Went to community, undertook participatory problem and solution, identification, prioritisation
- Designed a system for ownership by community
- Economic Valuation, livelihoods benefits
- Disaster planning, insurance, microfinance?
- Identified options for ongoing sustainability

- Satisfactory result: ½ Million Litres Extra Water Stored, Better planning and Maintenance tools.
- Not easy, time consuming, requires training
- Replicated?



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Community Consultation

- Core Group Training
- Participatory Approach
- Problem/Solution finding



Best Practices – Participatory Assessment

- **Have some action to offer – be aware many communities consulted without results**
- **Have local counterpart in community as project coordinator, govt or agency just advisor**
- **Use facilitators from each village/community group, also consider different focus groups.**
- **Undertake facilitator training – neutrality emphasis,**
- **Develop tools to make consultation process efficient → 3 hours maximum realistic**
- **Document past issues/analogues**
- **Work in local language**



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Best Practices Adaptation Implementation

- **Document traditional knowledge and use for awareness raising**
- **Undertake necessary baseline assessments once priority area identified – ensure information can be shared with community users in a meaningful way e.g. water system GIS maps for leak repair**
- **Assist with development of policy based on priority area**
- **Link to other processes & action in communities– synergies e.g. disaster preparedness**
- **Ownership through community/individual contribution to adaptation solution e.g. tanks**
- **Sustainability plan**
- **Monitoring**
 - e.g. tutaka, quarterly health inspections on tanks



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Concerns, Gaps, Needs, for Community Approach

- **Future climate change may bring different impacts from present day climate related issues**
- **Merging downscaled scenarios with local data is difficult**
- **Breakdown in observational data- early warning**
- **Awareness is expensive**
- **Burden of justification for adaptation implementation**
 - Community has identified a climate related problem, prioritised a solution that fits them, but a lot of work to prepare a project in terms of verification of scientific basis for project rationale



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Gaps, Needs, Concerns Adaptation Implementation

- **Despite increased baseline data & indications of impacts, lack of cofinancing can mean priority area under climate change not targeted for adaptation action e.g. Avatiu Harbour**
- **Recommended community role in adaptation not being acted on (e.g. housing design), need a driver, resources and awareness raising**
- **Limited input of traditional management systems e.g. coastal vegetation, marine reserves (ra'ui)**
- **Replication beyond pilot scale**



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Partnerships/Roles in Community Approaches

Local/village)

- Church, island council, traditional leaders, private sector
- Awareness, facilitation, monitoring and sustainability

Regional

- CROP (work together), PCC, WWF, Implementation agencies
- Synergies water/energy, training, facilitation, awareness

National

- Red Cross , Emergency Mgmt CI, Health, Met Development Planners, Decision Makers, NGO's, Sectoral Experts
- Community V&A, Data, Awareness, CC Integration

International

- Donors/GEF (burden of project preparation)
- Convention Processes, linkages



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UNFCCC Advance Community Approach

- **Guidelines for adaptation, extension of NAPA like process to non LDC SIDS**
- **5yWP to look at participatory approaches**
- **Linkages with other processes/conventions**
- **Work to stage III as referred to in convention – get adaptation happening**
- **Training, secondments, workshops**
- **Planning tools**
- **Data sharing, satellite images**
- **Technology transfer (sector specific usually)**



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Adaptation is needed in the small local communities that are most effected by the impacts of climate change, yet least equipped to cope with them



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A community based approach is necessary

Meitaki Maata