

SOPAC DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION GROUP

**NAURU IN-COUNTRY REPORT
11-12 February 2003**

SOPAC Trip Report 316

INTRODUCTION

This report of the Project Monitoring and Evaluation Group departs from the normal evaluation of a project in progress. It endeavours to assess the potential of community risk projects within a nation where minimal intervention has occurred in disasters or community risk areas. The evaluation intends to identify the key issues that Nauru faces, a way forward in addressing the key issues, and the relationship of the issues to the current project and the recently-determined community risk programmed as risk management as institutionalised within SOPAC. The Disaster Management Unit is currently in transition from a definitive project to an institutionalised programme within the infrastructure of SOPAC. The community risk programme addresses the strengthening of resilience to disasters including, developing national disaster reduction programmes, processes and structures supporting capacity building. The programme is intended to mainstream risk management as an approach for economic and social planning, hazard identification and vulnerability assessments. The additional component of the programme addresses hazard assessment and mitigation practices.

This evaluation, in itself, represents an example that of one of the components of the current Disaster Management Project (establishment of a sustainable unit in the region). The evaluation acts as support to the establishment of the Community Risk Unit within SOPAC as it is conducted during the transition from a specific project to an institutionalised programme. The fact that that unit has been titled Community Risk is evidence of the ever-evolving role of the current project as it emerges to an institutionalised programme within the region aimed to build safer and sustainable communities for future generations. This evaluation report provides comment on the linkage from the original project to the current community risk programme. It identifies a limitation of the original project design by its focus on natural hazards or at least as it is perceived by the members. It also offers key issues for the SOPAC Community Risk Programme and Nauru to consider and a suggested initial way forward.

CONTEXT

The transition to a community risk programme has the potential for significant impacts on the relationships of SOPAC with member countries. Nauru has joined the SOPAC Council within the last four years and has had limited exposure to Disaster Management capacity building or community risk management. The structure and services of SOPAC have been recently re-defined into the core areas of Corporate Services, Oceans and Islands, Community Lifelines and Community Risk. Beyond the recent entry to the SOPAC Council and the role as current chair, Nauru chaired the Pacific team for the World

Summit on Sustainable Development. The SOPAC structure and Nauru's involvement in recent international fora is timely for Nauru to now enhance its own risk management processes.

This in-country evaluation visit provides an opportunity to consider a nation where predetermined positions are minimal, and hence an opportunity is presented to establish sustainable practices and processes that would be of potential significant benefit to Nauru. It is also recognised that Nauru has limited conventional natural hazards, and hence any program will require flexibility in terms of focus and application.

This intervention will be within the context of what may be described as the 'pacific way' and in this case recognizing the Nauru culture and historical perspectives. It is essential that the community at a local and national level nominate the projects and claim ownership and accountability. Stakeholder perceptions are essential to engage ownership. Successful projects have the added benefits of enhancing the esteem of the community as recent events have placed significant financial hardship on the nation to the point of potential bankruptcy. Currently the incentive to work is minimal as Public Servants have not been paid since November 2002 and ex patriates since October 2002.

Poor financial management over recent decades and correspondingly inappropriate management of the nation's non-renewable resources that form the sole national income source have generated an alarming social and economic predicament over the entire island community. Future income sources are limited with the potential for ocean resource management farming one possibility. The return of Australian Counsel General and the 'Pacific Solution' has seen the re-establishment of a traditional donor in the nation.

The population of close to 10,000 has little usable land and a current land reclamation project on Nauru's 'Top Side' is in early stages where by previously mined land will be reclaimed by the Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation. The renewable land is currently planned for 500 hectares. It is a twelve-year project with tacit approval from landowners. The project is a component of a 1994 agreement with the Australian Government for \$57 M and \$2.5 M for each year for the next 20 years. Concern for the effectiveness of the initial \$57 M has resulted in a reliance on the annual contributions.

It is significant that there are no conventional mass media outlets, beyond the religious infrastructure. In terms of public awareness and community involvement this represents a potential serious restriction. However, given the predominance of religion, this is a potentially significant vehicle for promoting, disseminating and focusing information to all levels of the community.

It was also noted that the range of projects undertaken in Nauru should be aware of Nauru's recent joining of the Pacific ACP Group receiving support from the European Union.

ISSUES

A workshop was conducted to identify a number of community risk issues that could be addressed in the near future for Nauru. Twenty-two (22) participants attended.

The range of organisations and stakeholders represented at the workshop was restricted by the fact that Nauru has no disaster management office as in most other SOPAC member nations. Foreign Affairs provided excellent support and were the focal point of communications. In terms of future technical support for any community risk projects within country, the Department of Economic Development will be the prime coordinator of activities.

The focus of the workshop was an awareness raising exercise to identify key issues that can be addressed with respect to the broad issue of community risk.

The agenda was as follows:

1. General introduction (SOPAC role and Risk Management overview).
2. Round table discussion on awareness raising exercise by addressing the question “ Identify three areas where you think Nauru can benefit by improving lifestyles, improving community livelihood and securing a safer community”.
3. Generation of an acceptable list of issues.
4. Agreement of a way forward.

With a focus on sustainable development, the intention was to address ways to improve lifestyles and livelihood for current and future generations. In this context the focus was on building community resilience and reducing vulnerability. The participants agreed that there is a need for improvement and that the Community Risk Programme of SOPAC could be used to support the articulation of these issues. It was also agreed to focus on the way ahead and hence identify how things can be improved and addressed from a Nauruan perspective: little was thought to be gained by re-visiting historical problems. It was further agreed that a framework and process was required to address the identified areas of development. The PMEG chair explained that the issues may not be restricted to the community risk programme of SOPAC but the integration of issues with other SOPAC programmes was a possibility. The current European Union programme offered a number of possibilities, as it required community participation as project criteria.

The Disaster Management Unit Manager (now referred to as the Community Risk Programme Manager, following SOPAC’s restructure) clarified a number of considerations that could emerge, such as major fire, loss of water supply, a major aviation accident, support for a national plan, establishment of a coordination committee, or review of the capacity of response agencies. The examples highlighted a whole-of-government approach to risk management, especially economic, environmental and social development. He provided a brief overview of CHARM and the possibility of principles of CHARM operating in Nauru.

The items identified by the workshop participants were clustered under the headings of Governance, Youth Development, Planning, Infrastructure and Sustainability and Community Strengthening and Resilience;

Governance

Political Stability

Legislation and commitment to legislation

Comments:

It was seen that an update of all legislation was necessary at all levels and a political and community commitment to the update was required.

Youth development

Vocational training
Youth career pathways
Self-employment prospects
Curriculum support and development

Comments:

The school-to-work pathway was seen as a critical area, as was the pathway to higher education. The work opportunities for youth included self-employment, public sector and professional employment in the private sector. This recognition of different pathways would require some modification of the structure of the curriculum and associated curriculum development

Planning

Ecological preservation
Environmentally Sound Development
Planning guides
Residential Planning
Availability of Housing
Population control

Comments:

Areas such as ecological preservation require a set of planning guidelines and legislation to enable a sustainable approach to both marine and land. In the area of residential planning building codes were considered essential and more residential housing was required. Currently the Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation has completed a report on residential planning with plans for housing to be non air-conditioned and energy efficient.

In the land use plans there are areas assigned for agriculture and areas assigned to show the land uses before and after restoration. There is 500 hectares available for reusable land use with the intent to support a greater level of resilience and sustainability within the country. Significant community education is required in the area of revegetation and reforestation and some trials are already being conducted. The education program is intent to inform and gain greater community input into the 'Top side' project. There is a possibility that SOPAC could become involved in the project even though the project has been operating longer than Nauru has been a member of SOPAC.

Infrastructure and sustainability

UTILITIES AND SERVICES

Cheaper and reliable electricity
Public transport
Water supply – safe and reliable
Physical communications
IT access

Comments:

There was a need for energy sources to be seen as renewable. In the area of physical communications the current unreliable nature of the local and international communications infrastructure represented a serious impediment to working effectiveness and efficiencies. There was also a need to expand the use of the infrastructure such as a greater number and availability of telephones in business and residential premises. It was also noted that there was the possibility to enhance lifestyles by IT access.

Public transport was reported as best managed by having more local buses and, with it, the potential in a policy area to be related to protection from fuel price fluctuations and fuel availability for private use.

There is currently an AUSAID proposal for groundwater utilisation, investigating the use of safe water from land supplies. It was also recognised that this project will not generate sufficient water by itself and there was also a need to integrate the project into the 'Top Side' land reclaiming project.

Agriculture production

Food and crop production – self-sufficiency

Comments:

The food supply is mainly imported and there is a greater need for local production.

Waste management

Sewage and hard rubbish

Hazardous material disposal

Comments:

There is a current project (RDSF) addressing solid waste from residential housing to support landfill with top soil at top side. It was also recognised that there is a need for public education regarding the existence of the current project and its impacts on related issues such as health.

Disposal of technological hazards, such as car batteries and asbestoses, pertaining to extractive industries are seen as an increasing problem.

Community strengthening and resilience

Living within one's means

Strengthening values – Cultural, Christian, environmental, family

Development of appropriate skills revival

Community awareness and participation

Comments:

There is a concern amongst the participants that a number of Nauru nationals have retained the perception of the wealth generated by the Nauru Phosphate Company is still viable and consequently some Nauru nationals are considered to be living beyond their means. There was seen to be a significant need to return to living within economic means as a nation and as individuals. Related comments focused on the need to prevent lifestyles decreases and retain national values both from a cultural and Christian perspective. Some saw this need as common issue across the Pacific and related to the loss of traditional skills such as fishing and map reading.

RECOMMENDATIONS/WAY FORWARD

Nauru provided PMEG the opportunity to consider the impending community risk programme as it is directed more towards a generic risk management across a whole-of-government approach consistent with good governance. It is clear that the evolution of the programmes is developing appropriately but there is still a need for additional iterations. In particular, Nauru has enabled PMEG to appreciate the fact that the current iteration of the Community Risk component of the SOPAC operating programme is still directed predominantly toward natural hazard management compared to a generic risk management programme. There is the opportunity to continually refine the programmes moving towards a greater level of Community resilience, supporting good governance and engaging all levels of the community.

The outcome of the workshop resulted in an agreement that a minimum of a two-day workshop would be conducted to clarify the major issues and provide an indicative action plan.

This will require prioritizing issues and developing a clear task and outcome criteria which would provide a specific set of tasks for immediate action by all parties. The participants were concerned that the current financial status of the Nauru Government and the potential that non-payment of membership fees to SOPAC could restrict the implementation of nominated projects. The Chair clarified that this was not the case. A concern related to the position of the Government in the current political uncertainty and support for any nominated projects and the Government process of approval. It was noted by the chair and options of direct bilateral assistance and regional opportunities would be investigated. The appropriate timing of the proposed workshop was agreed to be immediately before or after the South Pacific Games. An indicative workshop program is attached as Appendix One.

It is recommended:

- That the proposed workshop proceed at the earliest mutually agreeable date.
- That the participants of the proposed second workshop (two days) be the participants of the first workshop as well as representatives of religious communities, telecommunications industry and health organisations.
- That the proposed SOPAC Community Risk Programme continue the transition to a more generic approach to risk management within a whole-of-government approach with the aim of greater community resilience; and
- That one outcome of the next workshop consider the formation of a six person reference group for the SOPAC CRP to develop the applications of Community Risk within Nauru and act as support for approval processes within the Nauru government.

APPENDIX ONE

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Identifying the Fundamental Building Blocks for Community Resilience

DAY ONE

Morning

Identification of base issues

Overview and clarification of Issues from February workshop

Prioritise the key issues from February workshop or emerging issues

Agreement of three (tentative) issues to address

Afternoon

Identification of resources needed to undertake the agreed issues

Identification of current resources needed

Gap analysis and follow-up discussion of how to acquire resources not currently available

DAY TWO

Morning

Who should be involved?

- Lead agencies/groups
- Support agencies/groups

Afternoon

How to develop an enduring action plan for the way forward

APPENDIX TWO

CONSULTATIONS

IN-COUNTRY NAURU 12/2/03 KEY STAKEHOLDERS' ATTENDANCE RECORD

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONTACT / Phone or email
Kim Hurbert	Foreign Affairs	
Limay Uera	Tourism	Eco Development
Roxen Agadio	Environment officer	Sec Eco Dev
Jarden Kephass	Eco Dev	Sec Eco Dev
Roy Harris	Fire Chief	ARFS
Nelson D. Tamakim	NIANGO	Ed Department
Lyn Teleni	Education	Ed department
Greta Harris	Eco Dev	Eco development
Warrick Harris	Eco Dev. Agriculture quarantine	Eco development
Leon Surawski	Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation	arceng@cenpac.net.nr
Russ Kun	Eco Development	Ed Dept
Robert Timothy	Firefighter	D.C.A.
Link Urea	Firefighter	D.C.A.
Leslie Adams	Chair Nauru Lands Committee	Eco dev
Krent Dabwido	Staff officer police	Nauru police
Sheedy Detabeng	Operational sgt	Police
Gregor Gavoa	Operational assistant constable	Police
Duxe Benjamin	Firefighter	D.C. A
Stution Temaki		
Bob Agigo	Public works	Works Dept
Julie Olsson	Land Use planning, Nauru Rehabilitation	julienauru@cenpac.net.nr 674 444 4146
Andrew Kaierua		akaierua@excite.com akaierua@cenpac.net.nr
POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES	TELECOMMUNICATION RELIGIOUS LEADERS HEALTH WORKERS	