

Dialogue from the field: Embracing strengths and voices to codesign a gender inclusive seaweed program in Samoa

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Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands in which this research was conducted

Gubbi Gubbi / Kabi Kabi peoples in Australia
Samoan community

We honour their connection to land, sea and community, and their traditional knowledge, wisdom and resilience, and we pay respect to their elders, past and present.



Value of seaweed in Samoan culture

Edible native species:

- *limu fuafua* (sea grapes, *Caulerpa* species)
- *limu a'au* (red seaweed, *Halymenia* species)

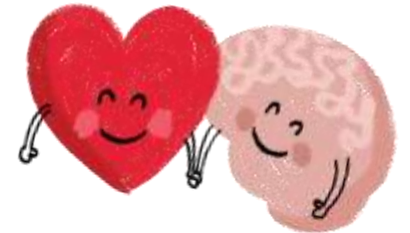


Benefits of seaweed:

- Sustainable food source, no feed crop
- Nutritious - vitamins and minerals, fibre, omega fatty acids, protein.
- Inclusive value chain for men, women and families.
- Socio-economic benefits – low cost; cultural and social significance

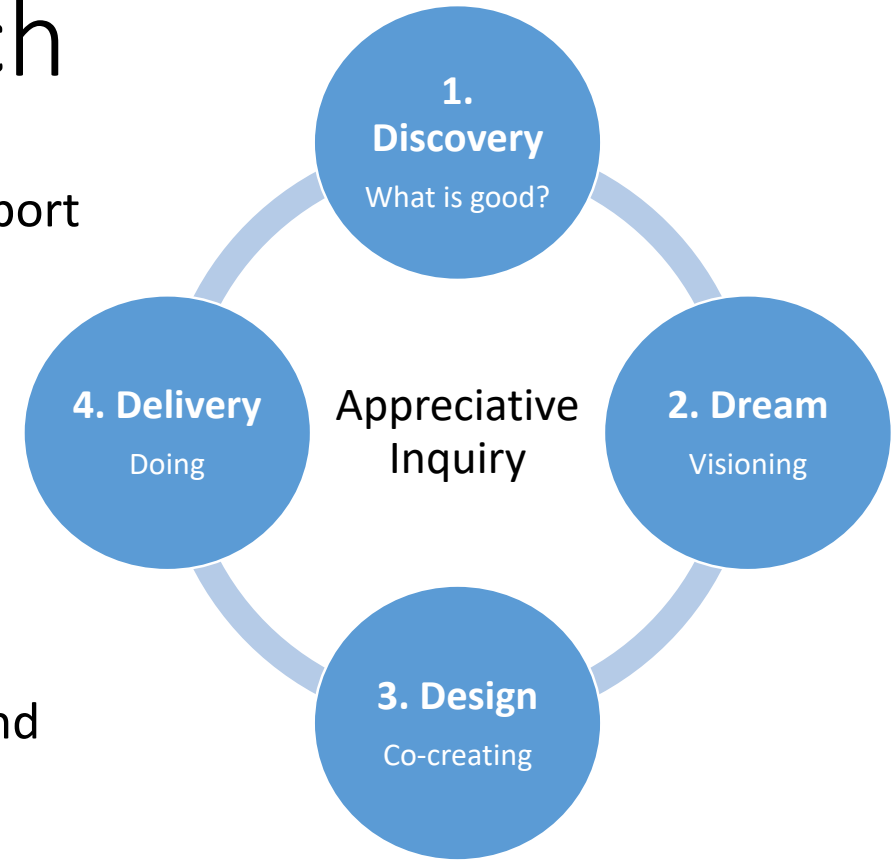
Seaweed aquaculture:

Samoa Government is committed to supporting gender inclusive, nutrition sensitive seaweed aquaculture



Our co-design team & approach

- Our aim: To develop a gender inclusive seaweed program to support Samoan villages improve wellbeing and livelihoods
- Our approach:
 - Participatory research approach using codesign and appreciative inquiry
 - Horizontal, multidisciplinary partnership
- Participatory approaches contest power structures, promote collaboration and bottom-up engagement, support ownership and sustainability



Project Partners



Samoa & Australian
Research Team



Samoa Ministry
of Fisheries Staff



The Samoan community

1. Discovery

Understand the community



2. Dream

Determine the areas of focus



3. Design

Develop the program & modules



4. Deliver



Build capacity of facilitators

Pilot and evaluate the program

- Understanding cultural and social structures
- Needs analysis – understand the roles of women and men in seaweed as well as enablers and barriers to engagement

- Use needs analysis data to determine areas for capacity building
- Identifying target groups – who needs to benefit?
- Aligning with MAF priorities and strategic vision

- Determining aims and learning objectives
- Designing the program to align with culture and social structures
- Drafting activities to meet aims (building off previous FFT work)
- Input and refining of activities

- Training the MAF staff in facilitation (including running the program and monitoring and evaluation activities)

- Selecting the village for the Pilot
- Logistics planning
- Delivering the pilot program
- Evaluation of the pilot



Phase 1: Discovery

Discovery: Culture & community



Embracing culture

- *Fa'asamoa* & *Fa'amatai*
- Reading & research
- Curiosity, open dialogue within the research team

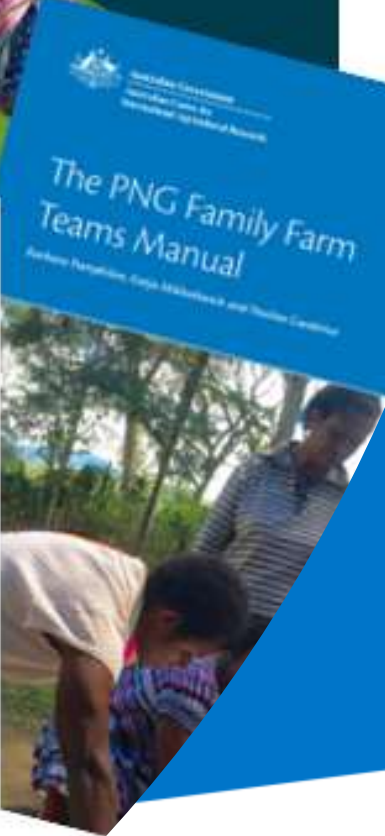
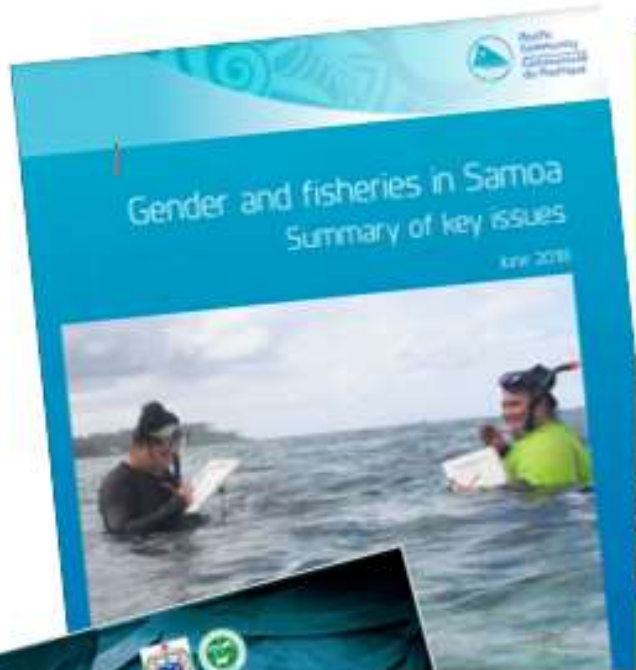
Understanding village needs

- Photo elicitation and focus group discussions
- 10 coastal villages in Savai'i (n = 135)
- 2 groups per village – gender disaggregated

Determining areas of focus

- Collaborative nature of Samoan culture & central role of *Fa'amatai* and Village Council
- Desire to work together & including women
- Specific skill needs (e.g. planning and management)






SAMOA

VILLAGE FONO ACT 1990

Assignment of Provisions

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short title and commencement 2. Interpretation 3. Village Fono continued 4. Written records not required 5. Powers of Village Fono relating to bylaws and economic development 6. Penalties 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Power of delegation 8. Courts to take account of partly imposed by Village Fono 9. Limitation of jurisdiction of Village Fono 10. Exemption from Income Tax 11. Right of Appeal
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VILLAGE FONO ACT 1990

1990 **No. 2**

AN ACT to validate and empower the exercise of power and authority by Village Fono in accordance with the custom and usage of their villages and to confer or grant certain powers and to provide for the incidental matters.

[Assent date: 30 July 1990]
[Commencement date: 16 October 1990]

1. Short title and commencement - (1) This Act may be cited as the Village Fono Act 1990.
 (2) This Act comes into force on such date as shall be specified by the Head of State acting on the advice of Cabinet, by Order.

2. Interpretation - In this Act unless the context otherwise requires:
 "village fono" in relation to any village means the assembly of the Ali and Faipule of that village.

Phase 2: Dreaming

Dreaming: Setting the vision

Aligning with priorities

- Samoan MAF – Strategic vision
- ACIAR priorities

Capacity building approach

- Family Farms Team approach
- Fa'amatai & Fa'asamoa

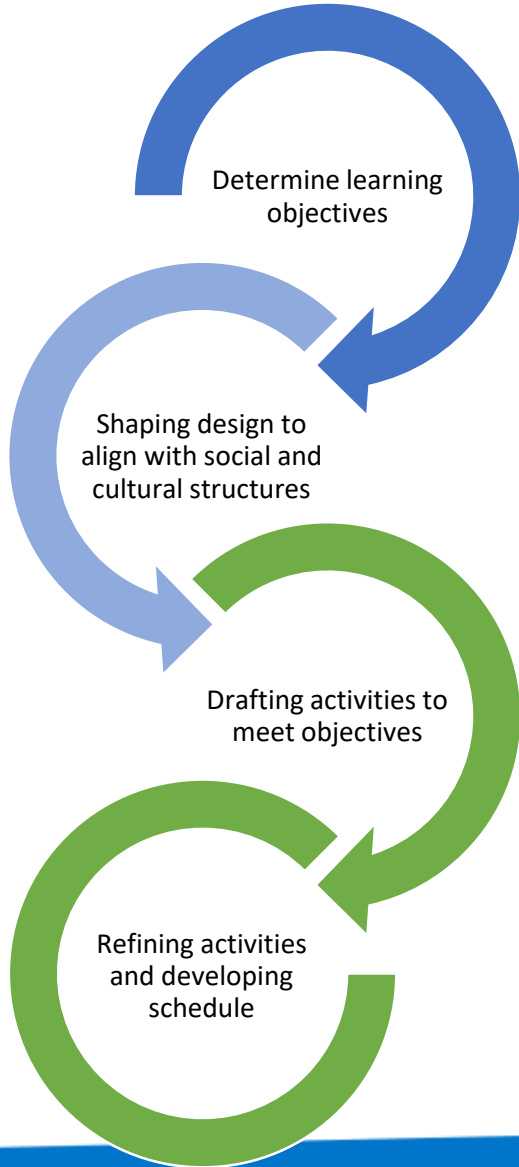
- Samoa Government – Village Fono Act
- [MAF Fisheries division](#) - Community Based Fisheries Management Programme (and Village Fishing Management Plans)
- Gender focus
 - SPC 'Gender & Fisheries in Samoa' report
 - ACIAR strategic priority

- Also underpinned Phase 3 - design



Phase 3: Design

Designing: Village Fishing Teams



Nov 2021 – Dec 2021

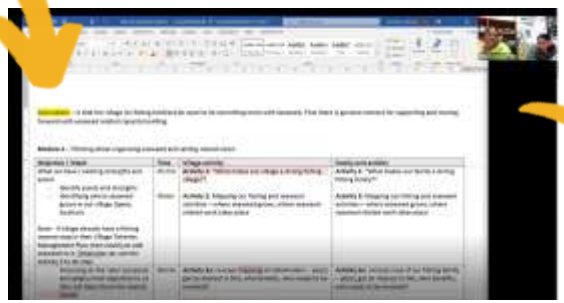
Nov 2021 – Jan 2022

Dec 2021 – Jan 2022

Jan 2022 – May 2022

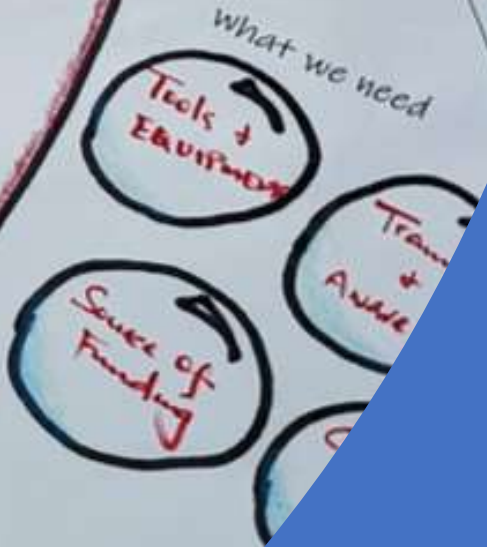
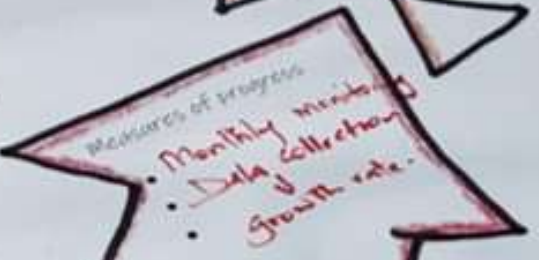
Steps 3 & 4

- Review and adapt PNG FFT
- Create 'new' activities
- First iteration drafted
- Review, input, changes
- 2nd iteration → codesign workshop
- Finalised for pilot



Village: VAISALA
Date: 21 Sept 2000
Village Seaweed Action Plan

Our vision...
Fasimauva, Fataleka
me ia Oia loto le
Vaisala o le loto i
maloloina o faavae alga
o Tugata o le loto.



Phase 4: Deliver



Delivering the Village Fishing Teams pilot



- Pilot held over two days during September, 2022
- Village of Vaisala, in Savai'i
 - 20 participants (14 men, 6 women) on day 1
 - 21 participants (14 men, 7 women) on day 2
- All village groups represented
- Workshop style, held at the MAF fisheries office in Asau
- Activities facilitated by MAF staff





Evaluating the pilot...



Evaluation activities

1. Feedback from participants on each module
2. Survey interviews with participants end of day 2
3. Debrief focus group with the facilitators



"The most important thing I've learned is its importance to my healthy living"
(Female participant)

"It was important for me that women have a contribution in growing limu."
(Female participant)

"The teamwork of men and women is important (working together)."
(Male participant)



Reflections

How did our process embrace strengths & voices?



Australian reflections

Inclusivity
Relationships and trust
Strengths-based
framework from outset
Reflexivity and flexibility
Agency, leadership and
visioning

Samoan reflections

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Australian reflections

Inclusivity
Relationships and trust
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Samoan reflections

Creativity
Advocacy
Respecting Samoan
priorities & culture
Capacity building of MAF
Overcoming barriers to
inclusive participation
Evaluation as part of co-
design



Tensions to navigate and juggle



Competing work priorities

Resource intensive (time)

Travel restrictions & virtual communications

No 'formula' – fluid, messy & dynamic

Managing expectations

Key Implications for gender

- Inclusive process
 - Allowed voice of women to be included (phase 1 and Phase 4)
 - Need to also be aware of other marginalised groups (e.g. untitled men, daughters of the village) and how to include their voice
- Female leadership
 - MAF staff leading the VFT program and in our research team are women – gender lens to their work, advocates and leaders in this space
- Strengths-based approach to gender is empowering



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank:

- Samoan community and the participants in our project
- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Samoa
- Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
- University of the Sunshine Coast



Australian Centre
for International
Agricultural Research



Questions?

Thank you!