

International Waters Programme - Samoa
COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
APRIL 2005

Strengthening the Management of Freshwater in Samoa

1. Introduction

The primary objective of Samoa's International Waters Project (IWP) is to find ways to improve the management of freshwater resources for the rural communities of Lepa and Apolima Island and to improve their access to minimum standards of drinking water.

The Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Meteorology is the government lead agency responsible for the implementation of the IWP in Samoa through the Division of Environment and Conservation.

Under the Environment Act the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) is responsible for the management of all catchment areas in Samoa. The Samoa Water Authority is the agency responsible for the management of water supply in Samoa. Therefore the MNRE and SWA are the two main bodies that are responsible for the management of quality and quantity of water for Samoa.

Water treatment has been introduced in Samoa's urban areas but many households still do not have access to treated water. In the rural communities, such as Lepa and Apolima Island, no water treatment has been installed to treat tap water supply from their intakes.

The Public Health Department and the Samoa Water Authority advises people to boil their drinking water - especially during continuous heavy rain.

Community consultation carried out by the Samoa IWP has shown that many people in these communities are unaware of the activities that are contributing to the contamination of their drinking water.

The Samoa IWP pilot projects in Lepa and Apolima are providing a good starting point for the development of a catchment management plan for the pilot communities. It is intended that this plan can be replicated by other rural communities in Samoa.

The Samoa IWP is also working together with relevant stakeholders in the water sector to contribute towards the development of a Freshwater Management Strategy for Samoa.

One primary objective of this strategy would be to find ways to help rural communities to manage their freshwater resources and improve their access to safe drinking water.

2. Background

At the first initial stakeholder workshop for the Samoa IWP in 2002, the participants agreed the project should focus on the protection of freshwater resources. . The focus on freshwater is also supported by:

- Nationwide consultation and the formulation of the country's National Environment Management Strategy (NEMS) in 1993.
- The government of Samoa's submission to the Strategic Action Plan for IWP in 1997 emphasized freshwater quality as a priority environment concern.
- The Strategy for the development of Samoa (SDS) 2002-2004 prioritizes water resource management as a key focus area. This SDS is encouraging close coordination between the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Meteorology and the Samoa Water Authority to ensure sound management of water resources.
- The need for this natural freshwater bodies ecology identified in the country's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in 2000.
- The rising public demand for sources of sufficient quality freshwater to complement the current multi-million expansion of a comprehensive user pay water supply service throughout the country.

A National Task Force Team for the IWP was established in February 2002. This team includes representatives from government ministries, NGO's, and the private sector. The NTF is the main body responsible for decision-making and guiding the project.

Lepa and Apolima Island are the two pilot communities for the Samoa IWP. The IWP wanted to pilot activities and approaches in a small community (Apolima) and a larger village (Lepa).

Apolima was also selected is that it is not covered by the Samoa Water Authority. Until the IWP no water testing or improvement work has been done for Apolima. In the case of the Lepa, their water intake was established about 32 years ago and its condition is now very poor. This water intake supplies two villages - Lepa and Saleapaga.

The Samoa Water Authority is the main body that periodically carries out water testing in the all government owned water intakes, including Lepa. The Ministry of Health also performs water testing, but only if requested and only for their records.

According to the Samoa Water Authority tests at Lepa and Apolima, the results indicated the presence of bacteria, high levels of coliform and e.coli contamination by either human/animal faeces, soil or rotten debris surrounding the intakes. This testing indicated

that the water quality for Lepa and Apolima intakes is very poor compared to WHO standards.

A Participation Problem Analysis workshop was carried out in 2004 to identify whether the communities were aware of any problems with their water supply. The workshop was also intended to help the community identify the root cause of the problem. These root causes were identified as the unrestricted access of people, cattle and pigs to the stream and water intakes.

Catchment areas of the two sites were all customary land including the area where the intakes are located. There is a current legislation under the PUMA act that deals with the management of customary land especially in land use planning.

Possible Solutions

The following solutions were identified by Lepa & Apolima during the Participation Problem Analysis in 2003.

Apolima

1. put pigs in sty and control number of domesticated animals on the island
2. build a cement drainage channel flowing to wards the sea
3. enforce of village land use rules on land-use
4. increase environmental awareness programs

Lepa

1. Stop deforestation and avoid weeding on riverbanks
2. Prohibit the use of chemicals
3. No more cultivation close to streams
4. Remove cattle farms from the streams and reservoir
5. Community to work together to protect the catchment areas
6. Reconstruction of reservoir
7. The village council to enforce village rules to protect villages freshwater resources.

The IWP has collaborated with the Samoa Water Authority to establish monthly water monitoring for the two sites.

The Ministry of Health is also working together with the Samoa IWP-to collect data on water born diseases for Lepa and Apolima. One of the objectives of this work is to help the community to be fully aware of the consequences of the problem. Other cases of unrelated water born deceases are also being collected to compare whether the quality of water is the main problem of sickness in the community.

Because of the different bodies that deals with water issues in Samoa, the IWP will be working together with the MNRE, SWA and other relevant stakeholders to try and implement activities that help rural communities to manage their own freshwater and mainly to improve the standard of drinking water.

3. Audiences

The key audiences for the Samoa IWP can be divided into three main groups:

1. Internal

- MNRE
- Faumuina Vole Sailimalo P. Liu
- Dr Tu'u'u leti Taulealo Chief Executive Officer of Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment,

2. Pilot Communities:

- Village Council (Chief & Orators)
- Community Committee members
- Farm and stock owners
- All residents of Lepa & Apolima

3. National

- National Task Force Team
- Samoa Water Authority
- The Ministry of Health
- Other national stakeholders

4. Objectives

The communications objectives of the Samoa IWP are to:

Pilot Community

- improve awareness of the problems effecting freshwater quality in the Lepa and Apolima Community
- help people understand why the quality of their freshwater is deteriorating
- help people understand how this problem is effecting the health of the community
- help the community and the water users understand how the IWP can help them to be more aware of the water quality in order for them to protect and manage their own water.
- promote the adoption of a Freshwater Management Plan for the Pilot communities to help minimise any harmful activities above the water intake
- help people adopt new behaviours to protect the quality of drinking water for Lepa and Apolima Community.

National

- To raise awareness that:
 - The poor management of freshwater is effecting the health of Samoa's rural communities and the health of the national economy
 - The IWP can help to provide a useful and cost-effective way to help rural communities to improving the management of their freshwater resources
 - Samoa is currently managing water quality in an uncoordinated way
 - We need to strengthen the way we support and coordinate the implementation of community-based catchment management plans throughout the rest of Samoa
 - We need to develop a Freshwater Management Strategy and to support the implementation of community-based catchment management plans
 - or all the rural communities in Samoa

5. Issues

There is a lack of awareness of the fragility of the water catchment area and the associated impacts on public health. People don't see it is their responsibility to protect water quality. They are still dependent on the Government as has been the case for the past thirty or so years.

Lack of a freshwater water management plan for the community. Landowners indicate a lack of arable land available to them and this is why they will continue to try and use their own land in the water catchment area

People are unclear on what the project is about and what they need to do.

People are tired of talk and no action.

The community believes that the project will provide everything for them.

There seems to be a lack of awareness from those responsible for managing water. They acknowledge that the water quality is degrading and only advise people to boil their drinking water - usually during heavy rain (the wet season) when the water is usually turbid [Public Health]

Lack of analysis of the water testing results.

Testing agencies do not communicate their results.

People don't have enough information to be able to make "informed decisions" about what options to take.

People are worried that a management plan may not allow them to use the land when they need it. Eg. For cattle farm and agricultural activities such as taro plantation.

Lack of legislation and enforcement

The IWP is currently competing for people's attention with a range of activities such as sports and cultural activities just to name a few.

6. Messages

The product that the IWP is selling is a change in behaviour at the community and the national levels. Like selling any commercial product one of the biggest challenges is trying to develop a product that has a competitive edge.

We need to try and make our messages as specific as possible – in relation to our target audience. We also need to take a phased approach that starts by raising awareness of the problem and then focuses on positive solutions that the community can introduce itself.

Community level:

- *The water quality could make you and your children sick*
- *The quality of our water is getting worse*
- *The water catchment is fragile*
- *We need to restrict damaging activities near the intake*

National:

- *Water quality in rural areas is below WHO standards*
- *This is damaging our public health and our economy*
- *We need a coordinated approach to improve the management of our water*
- *We need management plans at the community and national levels*

General Public

- *Water quality is EVERYONE'S responsibility – It starts with you!*

7. Strategy

The ultimate objective of the IWP Communications Programme will be to change the behaviour of the target audience to ensure a minimum standard of drinking water is

provided to the two communities. However this strategy recognises that we will have to take a staged approach to achieve this long-term objective.

1. Clarify what the IWP is trying to achieve- clarify that the project is about helping the community and country to protect the quality of their own water
2. Raise awareness of the problems effecting the quality of drinking water in Lepa & Apolima – why the water quality is deteriorating, how the problem is effecting public health.
3. Promote the implementation of a community-based catchment management plan for Lepa & Apolima – and the observation of specific rules to minimise harmful activities near the intake.

Project Brochure

The Samoa IWP will develop a brochure to explain the objectives of the project to stakeholders at the community and national levels.

Media

We need to use the media to raise awareness of the problem and what the IWP is trying to do to address it. We have commissioned a local journalist to write a feature article for Samoa explaining the problem and what the IWP is doing to try and help the community develop appropriate solutions. The Purpose of this assignment is to prepare a 1200 article for local and regional media on how the Samoa's International Waters Project is helping to:

- a) ensure access to safe drinking water in Lepa
- b) improve the management of freshwater in rural communities in Samoa.

This story will provide a useful starting point for similar radio and TV programmes.

Identify Community Champion(s)

We need to find a way to “personalise” the issue so everyday people can relate to what the project is trying to achieve. We need to identify someone from the community to help us communicate our key messages to our target audience. We need to identify someone who the community trusts who can help us to communicate both the problem and the proposed solutions. We need to work with our “Champion(s)” to clearly demonstrate what people actually need to do to protect their drinking water. This “champion” should be profiled in media, brochures and used as a spokesperson for public events, advertising etc

IWP Management Profile

IWP – Samoa is looking at profiling the CEO of Samoa Water Authority or CEO Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment and Meteorology to share information on how the IWP is helping to improve the management of freshwater at the national level.

Radio Programme

The project will work with local radio station to produce 10-minute radio programme to help focus attention on how the project is helping to improve the management of freshwater at the community and national levels. The programme will be based on three interviews of no more than 3 minutes each with:

1. a "champion" from the pilot community
2. a key decision-maker from a relevant national Ministry
3. a relevant "expert" or NGO representative

Project Video

The project could work with local TV station to produce 15-minute programme based on the same formula used for the radio programme. The video could be screened on local TV and used for public meetings. It could also be provided to a regional audience through the Pacific Way.

Research Programme

How can we find out more about the awareness/attitudes/behaviours relating to drinking water quality? This information is really important in terms of developing any ongoing communications work at the local and national levels.

- Where do people think their tap water comes from?
- How many people use rainwater tanks for drinking? How many use the public system?
- Do people use different water sources for different purposes - gardening, laundry, drinking??
- Do they think the public supply is treated?
- Do they think it is safe to drink for themselves? children? tourists?
- Do they boil their water - all the time? Only when it is cloudy?
- When do people decide that their water is good enough to drink from the tap?
- Do they buy bottled water? How often?
- Do people make the connection between diarrhoea and microbial contamination?

A Behaviour Change Campaign

If required – audience research could be used to design a campaign to improve water quality management in Lepa & Apolima.

Get Started!

To build ownership in the community we need to be a start on some of the physical activities that will involve everyone in the community, for example, the reconstruction of water intakes and the provision of bins and the awareness campaign (PPA, 2004).

8. Implementation

What	Why	Audience	When	Who	Costs
Printed materials					

Project Brochure	For the targeted audiences to have an idea of what the IWP is trying to achieve.	Community and national	Completed – not distributed	PA	Printing and distribution??
Pamphlets/Fact sheets	To raise awareness of the communities to the problem that they are facing.	Specific target groups	June	PA	Printing
Newsletters	Update key stakeholder about project progress	NTF National	Quarterly	NC and PA	Printing
Project Poster	To clearly communicate the one key message to the target audience	Community/ National			Printing
Print media					
Feature article	Raise awareness of the project at the community/national levels	Community/ national/Regional	April 5, 2005	Cherelle Jackson	
Electronic media					
Radio programme	Personalise the issue – show how community activities improve national planning	Community/ National/Regional		NC	
Video documentary	As above	As above	July 2005	NC/PA and Community	
Community Activities					
Environment and Water Monitoring programme in community	Capacity building...seeing is believing	Community	Ongoing (monthly)	IWP, SWA and Health Ministry	
Support community events/activities that deal with water	Eg. sponsor prizes, aid campaigns, do presentations, etc PR	Community at large		NC, PA	
Research					
Baseline Assessment	The results are easily understood	Community at large	June	IWP, SWA and Health	

Audience Research	To provide greater understanding of how best to communicate to the community	Community	March-April 2005	NC	
National Campaign (if required)					
Television ads/infomercials	Promote awareness of water as a valuable resource	National	Ongoing	IWP team / NTF	
Posters etc					

9. Measurement

- Water quality testing to show actual status and change – by Samoa Water Authority. Groups such as youth groups can also do some tests and observations as part of their environment activities.
- Results board – especially showing a decline in ‘bad’ results over the months, years so they can see their positive activities are working (or not).
- A management plan in place for Lepa and Apolima and all intakes in Samoa’s rural communities. Reservation of all water catchments
- Number of media items produced and distributed
- Audience research to show change in awareness/attitudes/behaviours