

Increasing Women's participation in community based management in Solomon Islands



In Solomon Islands the capacity for central government management of inshore fisheries is small; community-based approaches, where resource owners implement adaptive management regimes, are seen as appropriate inshore fisheries management tools. The success of the approach requires the engagement of men, women and youth, however cultural and educational constraints can create barriers to the active involvement of women in management decision-making meaning men are often at the forefront when interacting with facilitation agencies. A gender analysis in several villages showed that women felt their marine resources needed to be looked after and managed, but that they lacked the necessary knowledge and information to contribute fully to the decision-making process.

Objectives

To facilitate greater engagement of women in resource management decision-making, a train the trainers approach was designed and utilised to empower a small group of women to share their learning with others in the community, particularly women and children.

Training methodology and process

A program was developed based on the need to account for different levels of knowledge, literacy and learning styles among individuals. The following four components were considered:

1. **Selection of participants:** Literate, confident women were selected who could understand key messages delivered in pidgin and also effectively translate these into local language when subsequently doing "awareness" within their communities.
2. **Workshop topics:** The program drew strongly on the traditional knowledge of the women rather than introducing new concepts and placed this in context of resource management and how this relates to family health and well being.
3. **Modes of delivery:** A two to three day program included group discussions and activities, video segments, singing, and presentations. Printed colour fliers containing the messages in English, Pidgin and the local languages were designed and used as resource material.
4. **Workshop evaluation:** A questionnaire based evaluation on levels of knowledge and confidence pre and post workshop was conducted.



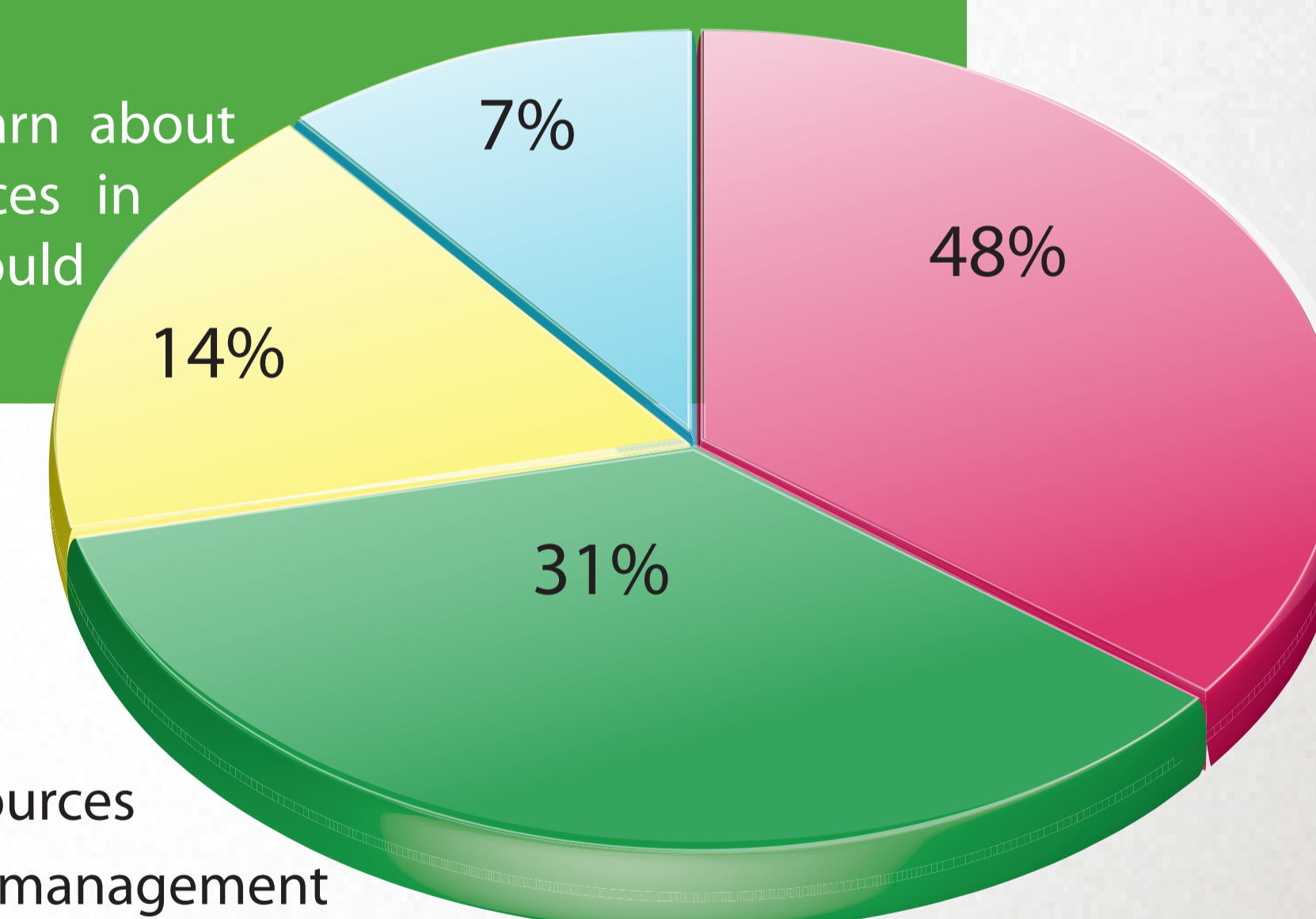
Results

Although 21% of participants had previously had some involvement in community discussions on marine or land resources, 81% had never participated in a marine resource management workshop before.

Prior to the workshop participants expected to learn about marine resource management and marine resources in general. Seven percent had no expectations, as this would be the first workshop they had ever attended.

New things participants hoped to learn from the workshop (n = 31)

- marine biology
- no expectations
- marine/land resources
- marine resource management

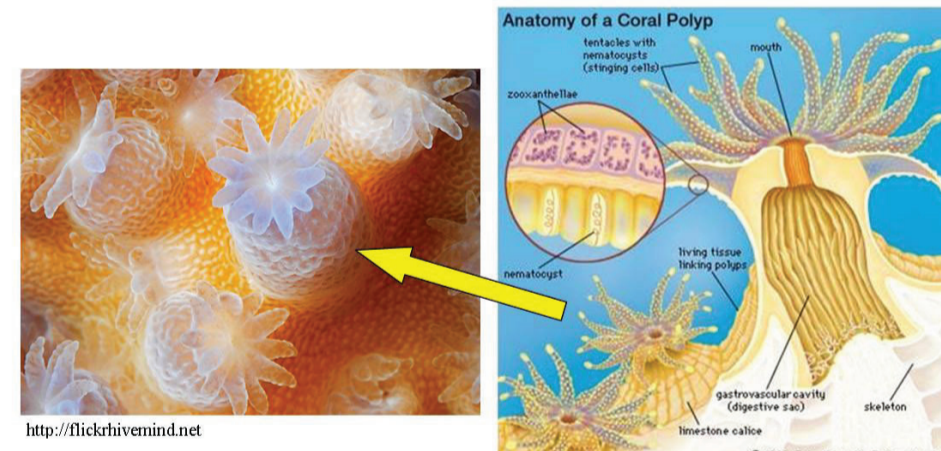


Marine resources are important for a healthy family and a healthy community

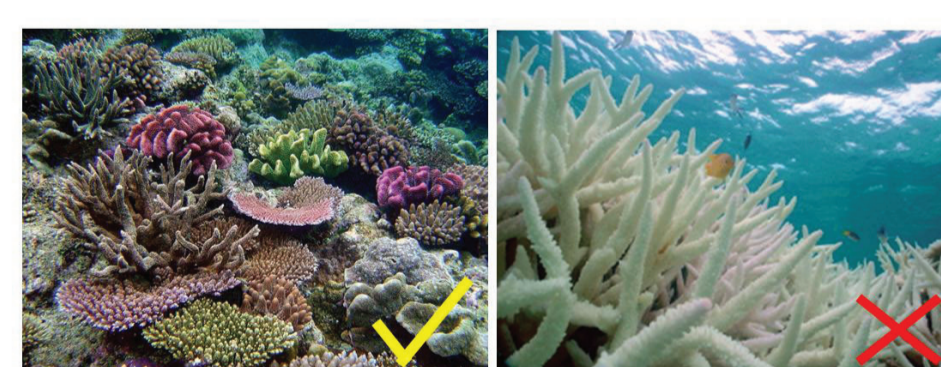


We get money and food from the sea

A coral is an animal. A healthy reef is made of live coral.



The animal part of the coral makes the stone part grow. A small plant that lives with the animal gives the colour. Corals need clean water and light to grow. White corals are dead corals.



Participants found the topics based on biological concepts and life cycles more difficult to grasp than those about management concepts. The training provided participants with confidence, with 92% of participants saying they felt more confident in contributing to public discussions on marine resource management at the conclusion of the training. As a result of their ability to contribute more to resource management discussions participants expressed their desire to see changes in their community including: improvements in marine resource management, more cooperation in management of resources, replenished marine resources and protection of marine resources.

Follow-up monitoring has shown that participants utilised church gatherings and neighbouring village visits to conduct formal and informal trainings of their own to further these goals. In addition some of the women have joined the resource management committees/technical teams, comprised of men, to conduct information/awareness in neighbouring communities.

Conclusions

The lessons learned from a series of trainings have enabled the formalisation of knowledge and goals of village women into informative and appropriate education materials. These are being made broadly available to assist women throughout Solomon Islands to participate more actively in the management of their marine resources.

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