

UNESCO

Small Islands Voice



Beyond the inter-regional, island-based internet discussions, Small Islands Voice focusses on:

ISLAND COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

Island communities, whether villages, specific interest groups, or entire islands, are making concerted efforts to plan and shape their future development.

Pacific

In *Palau, Micronesia*, Small Islands Voice is working with the Palau Conservation Society to implement a **Community Visioning Process**, whereby communities lay out blueprints for changes they want to see within their areas – these might range from improvements to the local health centre to having a cleaner environment to more employment opportunities for young people – they then implement their plans and evaluate their progress on an ongoing basis.



Dr. Caleb Otto, Director of Public Health said,
"The end goal of community visioning is to develop
a plan based on the vision of the grassroot level."

Palau Horizon, 28 June 2002

Pacific continued

In Cook Islands, Polynesia, Small Islands Voice is supporting an **Island Memories Project**. Documenting island memories – legends, stories, ways of living in the past – before they are forever lost, is the goal of this project, being undertaken by the Taporoporoanga Ipukarea Society. They are working with communities in Outer Islands – schools, Island Councils, and other groups – to record island memories on videotape. Island elders are being interviewed in a sensitive manner, and young islanders participating in a previous video training workshop (in April 2004) are also involved in the project. The video products will be used for education, promotion of island identity and pride, as an historical archive and for tourism. Work has started in Mauke, one of the islands of the Southern Group.



Ms Maara Murare of Mitiaro, Cook Islands, presenting a gift of a black pearl to Ms Sandra Pierantozzi, Vice-President of Palau, November 2002

"Life in Mitiaro is very traditional, very Polynesian. The population is 238 and there is just one guesthouse. Respect is very important and local customs such as going to church on Sundays must be followed."

Maara Murare, Cook Islands, November 2003

In Fiji, in Melanesia, Small Islands Voice is working with the Pacific Centre for Sustainable Development at the University of the South Pacific to design and implement a **'Clean X' Project** in various communities around Fiji. For example, in the Navosai community, a rapidly growing migrant settlement near Suva, public services are irregular at best, and as a result the community has taken responsibility for a number of services normally handled by government – such as road side clearing, planting, beautification and occasional waste disposal.



Dr K. Koshy of the University of the South Pacific (far left) presenting a wheelbarrow and various tools to the elders of the Navosai community, Suva, Fiji, August 2004

"Having a safe environment should be everyone's business. This type of outreach programme will enable us to see what wrong we are doing to the environment and what needs to be done to correct the abuses."

Mr Pratap, Director of Health Services, Lautoka, Fiji, Daily Post, 18 August 2003

Caribbean

In **St Kitts and Nevis**, the *Leeward Islands*, Small Islands Voice is helping the UNESCO National Commission and the Ministry of Education in tackling a very serious problem – the increasing rate of crime and violence in their country. Since much of the increased crime and violence is perpetrated by young people, what better sector of society to focus on than that of youth? A **Backchat Communications Project** has been started, facilitated by Small Islands Voice, in which school students attempt to find ways of alleviating these problems by interacting with other youth, via radio and TV programmes, newsletters and the internet.

“For me, I think that the mentality of leaders in society contribute to either an increase or decrease in this growing problem. As long as people continue to exist it will never end, ‘cuz crime and violence is like a circle, no end. I think changing the mentality of people can control it”.

Angel Eyes, Backchat Programme



First issue of the Backchat newsletter

In **St Vincent and the Grenadines**, the *Windward Islands*, Small Islands Voice has supported the Bequia Community High School in a **Glass Recycling Project**. Students have attacked the growing problem of broken glass on the playing field, school compound, drains and beaches, with cleanups and a glass recycling programme for which they have won several awards. They have expanded this project to incorporate their families and their community. The school is now a drop-off point for unwanted bottles. The students break these into small pieces and produce decorative patio tiles and park benches for their school yard and community areas. The environment is now a safer place as a result of their efforts.



Discarded glass bottles are crushed and recycled into many different products by the students of Bequia Community High School

“We need to work locally and make small differences locally. Small Islands Voice can help us address our everyday problems.”

Dr June Marie Mow, CORALINA, San Andres Island

Indian Ocean

In Seychelles, Small Islands Voice is working with the Department of the Environment in a **Hotel Beach Management Project**. The support of hotels and other government agencies has been obtained to assist with the measurement and effective management of the islands' beaches. A pilot group of hotels are helping with measuring changes in their beaches and sending the information to a national beach database.



Hotel staff at Lemuria Hotel measuring a beach profile at Anse Petit Kerlan, Seychelles, September 2003

"We aim to develop this new partnership with the hotel industry into one of our main weapons in the increasingly complicated battle to ensure Seychelles' beaches remain sustainable for years to come".

Ronny Jumeau, Minister for Environment,
Seychelles, 21 July 2003

In the Maldives, Small Islands Voice is supporting a **Waste Management Project** with the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in Eydhafushi, an island in Baa Atoll. Eydhafushi, with its population around 2000 people is one of the major fishing islands in the Maldives. The Island community has identified waste management as a major problem, and are conducting a waste characterization survey prior to developing potential solutions. (Solid waste management is one of the most serious problems facing small islands as was seen by a recent discussion on the Small Islands Voice global internet forum, at www.sivglobal.org.)

These 'snapshots' of activities show how Small Islands Voice is working with island communities. The potential of Small Islands Voice is not only seen in substantive community action on the ground, but also as a means of strengthening solidarity as islands come together to share their knowledge, their experiences, their activities and their futures.

"I am proud that we have come together at this Small Islands Voice meeting. I have often thought that at UN meetings, small islands do not have a chance to be heard. But we do. We have brains, and intelligence. What we need to do in the small islands is to put our brains together and be able to meet everyone else on an equal footing".

Ms Sandra Pierantozzi, Vice-President of Palau,
22 November 2002

To read about these and other activities, see
www.smallislandsvoice.org