



Improving Ecotourism Knowledge with Digital Video and
Photography in Vanuatu's Remote Communities.

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List of Acronyms

CELAC	Collecting and Exchange of Local Agricultural
CESPA	Centre de Services de Production Audiovisual
CESPAC	Centro de Servicios de Pedagogia Audiovisual para la Capacitacion
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IIED	International Institute for Sustainable Development
NGO	Non Government Organization
PRODERITH	Programa de Desarrollo Rural Integrado del Trópico Humedo
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
TAFEA	TAFEA Province five islands: Tanna, Aneityum, Fatuna, Erromonga, Aniwa
TIES	International Ecotourism Society
TTC	TAFEA Tourism Council
WCED	The World Commission on Environment and Development
VKB	Village Knowledge Broker

Abstract

Tourism in the South Pacific islands of Vanuatu has become a vital contributor to the national economy. Yet, the level of tourism growth in rural communities on the outer islands is considerably less than the urban capital city. The general Ni-Vanuatu population lacks the experience, knowledge and resources essential to operate effectively ecotourism businesses in their communities. This has resulted in their exclusion from actively participating in the national tourism market as entrepreneurs at the local level and in development and therefore as beneficiaries of the positive outcomes from a growing industry. This research explores how video and photograph technology can overcome remoteness, infrastructure and socio-economical disadvantages that limit rural residents' access to communication in the southern province of Vanuatu. It also examines how the technology can be utilized as a tool to improve the local population's knowledge of ecotourism and their capacity to participate in local ecotourism enterprise for improved quality of life.

Introduction

Sustainable Ecotourism is a tool that can contribute to improving the livelihoods of local community residents by generating economic and social benefits, while minimizing negative impacts on local natural and cultural resources (Denman, 2001, p. 4) (Vincent & Thompson, 2002, p. 12). Tourism is an industry that offers multiple products, and crosses multiple sectors; ecotourism, especially in developing countries, can be even more complex. The intent to generate economic benefits while preserving natural and cultural resources in local communities

creates the necessity for broad access to significant opportunities and knowledge that expands various sectors. It is essential that rural residents can manage a successful business in the tourism market and in their communities. This requires that they have resources available to them to operate their business effectively in their communities. Furthermore, it is important that ecotourism is done in a manner that protects their environment for the future. If ecotourism is not planned appropriately and managed responsibly, then negative impacts will occur, impacts that are mostly felt in the local community.

Physical infrastructure and socio-economical disadvantages prevent Vanuatu's rural indigenous residents from having access to necessary resources to own and operate ecotourism enterprises in their communities. Because of these disadvantages the Vanuatu government struggles with awareness and training efforts that provide ecotourism and business information in rural areas. This paper researches innovative methods of digital visual media technology which may provide solutions to overcome various barriers and unlock local access to information, creating opportunities for stimulating a rural ecotourism economy.

Statement of the Problem

In Vanuatu, ecotourism development has been difficult to achieve in its rural communities because of its geography of being a remote and small island developing nation in the South Pacific. The indigenous residents of TAFEA Province referred to as TAFEA, in Vanuatu lack the experience, knowledge and resources essential to operate effectively ecotourism businesses in their communities. This has resulted in their exclusion from actively participating in the national tourism market as entrepreneurs at the local level and in development and therefore as

beneficiaries of the positive outcomes from a growing industry. Furthermore, being rendered non-participants has led to negligible development projects and assistance programs that have overlooked the locals' priority needs. In rural areas that already have tourism activities, the consequences of local non-participation were additional unfavorable economic and social conditions. In the southern rural islands of TAFEA, these include: increases of failing businesses, incidences of conflicts, signs of change in traditional systems, and disillusionment about tourist visits. This situation is expected to continue as access to information and resources to improve knowledge and skills remain limited in rural areas. In addition, the government has yet to find ways to overcome other disadvantages to ecotourism development.

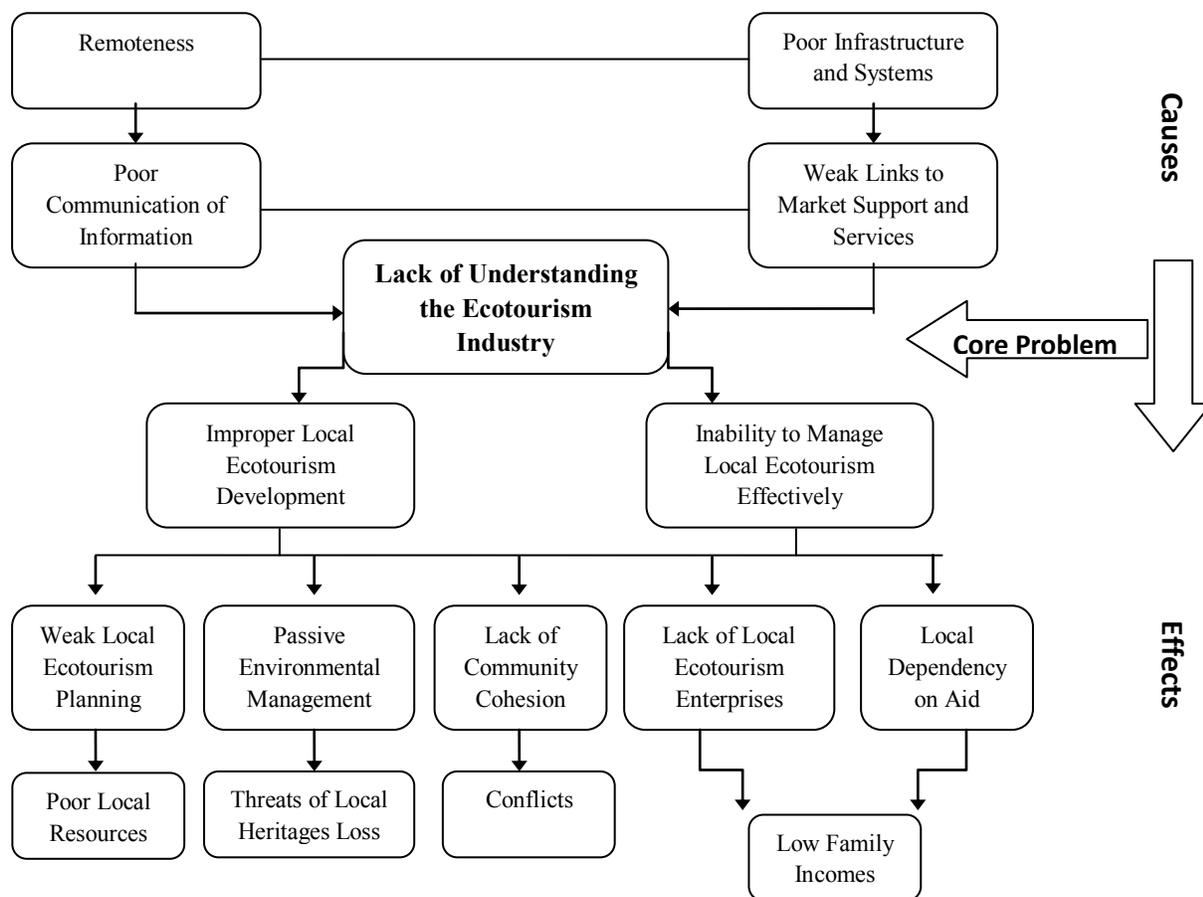


Figure 1: Problem Tree

Tourism Background: Vanuatu and TAFEA Province

Vanuatu Tourism

Vanuatu is a chain of 83 islands in the South Pacific whose Melanesian population of 234,023 is scattered over approximately 30 islands. The nation turned to tourism to improve the national economy and livelihood. Since 2003, Tourism, real estate, construction, and aid assistants have been the force that has driven a robust economic performance in Vanuatu (Sofield, 2003, p. 120) by an average 6% annum (Howes & Soni, 2009, p. 1). The tourism industry has steadily outperformed all other sectors and is a vital economic driver. It leads the nation's gross domestic product with a total of all related sectors at 67% and about a 70 % share of economic increases (Carr, Davis, David, & Rynveld, 2009, p. 26). Cruise Ships, resorts and hotels, and duty free goods have become important subsectors. The tourism market has created new income opportunities. But, the wealth of a nation is not well distributed, even if the gross national product shows growth (R. White, 2004, p. 7). Agriculture export once supported the economy. The total sector including fisheries and forestry has declined to 16.7% of the GDP in 2007(Carr et al., 2009, p. 43). Despite improved changes to the national economy, tourism activity—or other sector activity—has yet to develop in Vanuatu's rural islands and the industry is small in comparison to Fiji. Also, there are economic concerns between the agriculture and services sectors that include: “inequality of income distribution, poverty of opportunity in rural areas, rapid population growth; lack of formal employment and income-generating opportunities for school leavers (Carr et al., 2009, p. 26).”

Vanuatu's tourism and hospitality growth and its development are driven by foreign entrepreneurs, foreign investments and deregulation (Howes & Soni, 2009, pp. 2-3). Hotel and construction development has centralized the majority of tourism activities, opportunities,

benefits and resources in the urban capital, Port Vila on Efate Island. Smaller scale tourism activities on some rural islands, particularly Santo and Tanna, are not enough to change local incomes. The income of 40% of the total population—51% in rural areas—is below \$1 a day with 16% living under the basic needs poverty line (Committee for Development Policy, 2009, p. 1). In addition, 80% of Ni-Vanuatu people who live in rural areas remain dependant on subsistence agriculture as a main source for their livelihoods (Carr et al., 2009, p. 19). A private sector dominated by foreigners in urban Port Vila and a rural sector that contributes 8% of the GDP represents a dual economy (Committee for Development Policy, 2009, p. 1). It is contributing to the nation's inequitable income distribution gap. Without economic development in the rural islands, over two thirds of the population remains in poverty.

TAFEA Tourism

The southern region of Vanuatu is a group of five islands that are the TAFEA Province; Tanna, Aneityum, Futuna, Erromongo, and Aniwa. On these remote islands, traditional custom and practices are integral to the Melanesian cultural lifestyle of 32,500 people. Like everywhere else in Vanuatu, the national languages are spoken: Bislama, English, and French. However, outside of the main centers on Tanna, tribal languages are preferred. Tanna, the most populated island, is home to 28,800 people who mostly live in rural areas. The remaining TAFEA population is spread out even more sparsely on their islands. West Tanna is the location of the provincial and new



Figure 2: Vanuatu Map (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010)

municipal centers and a sufficient range of public service offices. They are the only two areas in the entire province that have these full services, electricity and piped water supply systems. There are no sealed roads in TAFEA and some islands have no transport roads at all. Telecommunications has improved with mobile services but full coverage is limited to mainly Tanna; it services 63% of TAFEA's population (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009a, p. 27). Other islands must rely on unreliable fixed lines with sparse coverage. Internet connectivity is a poor dial-up internet service provided through the unreliable fixed lines making them practically useless. Satellite internet was introduced in 2010, but, is available at a couple of public sites in West Tanna. The Public Works Department is currently the only provincial government office that has internet connection.

Tourism is small scale in TAFEA but, is increasing slightly below the national pace. Two of its islands receive the most of the estimated 14% of Vanuatu's tourists that visit the outer islands; Tanna by plane and Aneityum by cruise ship. Since 2004, Tanna has had more tourist visitors after Port Vila (Vanuatu National Statistics Office, 2009b). Unlike the urban capital, except for four partnerships with expatriates, all tourism businesses are solely owned by Ni-Vanuatu residents. There are no formal statistics that show the significance of tourism to TAFEA's local economy. However, Tanna's natural landmarks and cultural tours are given generous visibility in national marketing programs. Mt. Yasur volcano has become a national attraction and is the main tourist draw to Tanna. In response to tourist increases, TAFEA residents are building more bungalows and cultural tours as an opportunity to generate income. They justify the need to start tourism enterprises on the expectations that if they build these businesses more tourists will come (Slatter, 2006) (Lipscomb, 1998, p. 197). Currently, on Tanna, tourist bungalows outweigh significantly the number of tourist arrivals. Because Ni-Vanuatu people lack business and tourism knowledge and skills, they do not plan for successful businesses nor consider the constraints of TAFEA's weak infrastructure. The few established businesses on Tanna are accommodating the tourists. And, a significant amount of Tanna's residents are losing their investments to failing business.

Despite the increases in tourism activity on Tanna and Aneityum, there has been minimal government attention given to develop conditions to improve tourism enterprise opportunities in TAFEA Province. The few government attempts were unsuccessful and can be attributed to the lack of clear visions and directions for local tourism development. The Vanuatu Tourism Office and Department of Tourism is "under resourced, resulting in a lack of cohesion and insufficient focus on important policy development initiatives (Carr et al., 2009, p. 85)." The Department of

Tourism (2009) whose responsibility is national tourism development, acknowledges on their website that there has never been structured guidelines to achieving quality standards. Not until 2009, was rural tourism described as ecotourism products. The few implemented projects that were designed under the guidance of aid and development agencies were not locally supported and ultimately abandoned. TAFEA residents complained that short programs lacking necessary content and follow-up delivered by unqualified people defeated the purpose. In addition, aid funding was not enough and bureaucracy limited the local government's access to finances to deliver programs to a large portion of communities.

Other negative impacts have arisen in the communities of TAFEA from tourism and the lack of development. Jealousy stemming from the unequal distribution of tourism opportunities and disagreements over land rights has led to conflicts in communities and among tourism business owners. The conflicts are also straining the network of the TAFEA Tourism Council (TTC) whose members are local owners and operators. There is a threat of traditional practices being lost. Slatter (2006) comments that when tourism is introduced to communities of marginal economies who depend on agricultural subsistence or informal work for income, the activities may become less viable or replaced by tourism activities (Slatter, 2006, p. 7). TAFEA Province, especially Tanna, is known for its strong ties to ancestral heritage and traditional lifestyles. Some communities have concerns that increases of tourism profits and culture exchange will increase harmful influences of western society on the community. Aneityum residents expressed that some traditional practices, like gardening, weaving, local material housing and custom ceremonies, now play a lesser role in their lifestyle. Servicing cruise ships utilizes a lot of their time and conflicts with cultural calendars. Locals have generated substantial income to make a modern lifestyle more affordable and desirable. It is possible that a new value system based on

modern and material things will replace the integrated social unit which strength is based on personal relationships (Sofield, 2003, p. 125). Another concern is that the public is unaware of all the negative impacts of tourism that can affect the local social and natural heritages. In the Vanuatu Economic Report (2009) the authors criticized the government's passive role in environmental management which they contend offers little support to prevent negative impacts and increase benefits in the rural communities, even though sustainability is adopted in most programs (Carr et al., 2009, p. 143).

Literature on the Problem

Lack of Tourism Knowledge

Evidence of apparent negative impacts from tourism in the urban capital and outer islands reveals that the Ni-Vanuatu people lack experience in and understanding of tourists, how the tourism industry works, and its opportunities and impacts. And, this problem even exists at the national level among those who advise and supporting agencies (Denman, 2001, p. 16). For example, some heads of government ministries who directly influence public sectors, maybe technically skilled yet, they don't have training or experience in management and leadership (Carr et al., 2009, p. 127). Furthermore, the Vanuatu government acknowledges that they have a "social and cultural system with limited understanding and experience with business concepts and practices (Department of Economic and Sector Planning, 2006, p. 5)." In addition, the human capital of Vanuatu is unskilled and has a low level of education. Kim & Uysal (2002) states, "This inherent geographical flaw may affect many areas in effectively exploring for their future development, not only in tourism-development policies, but also in overall economic

viability (Kim & Uysal, 2002, p. 175).” Resident’s lack of understanding tourism and how it works is a critical because it is conducive to several other barriers to sustainable development of tourism and its variations (Moscardo, 2008, p. 8). It is a direct barrier to local participation in tourism markets and tourism development (Moscardo, 2008, p. Introduction); (Cole, 2006, p. 633);(Sammy, 2008, p. 75) and the “lack of local tourism leadership and the domination of external agents (Moscardo, 2008, p. 8).”

The local population low participation in tourism markets and development encourages three adverse situations for business opportunities in TAFEA’s economic development. Goodwin (1998) claims that tourism entrepreneurial activity is limited to foreigners or local elites and is centralized to urban centers or those who have established businesses. Second, when rural residents are not supplying “additional tourism products and services” there is leakage, reducing the impact of tourism development in local areas (Goodwin, 1998). Third, rural residents do not understand the tourism development process; therefore, public involvement in the decision-making, planning, management in the tourism development process is low (Tosun, 2000, p. 630) (Moscardo, 2008, p. 8) (Cole, 2006, p. 631) (Timothy, 2002, p. 161). Oftentimes, communities are left out at the beginning stages (Sammy, 2008, p. 84) which can be detrimental to TAFEA’s ecotourism development. Local community governance is based on a customary system. Chiefs and elders take responsibility of their communities’ well-being, since negative and positive impacts of ecotourism are directly felt in the local communities. Community participation needs to continue and sustain throughout the development process. Local community support of development projects and the assurance that opportunities and benefits meet communities’ needs depend on it (Cole, 2006, p. 630).

TAFEA community residents express that there is strength in their community, but taking action in developing their tourism businesses is difficult because they do not know what to do. The low confidence in their ability to build local tourism has hindered the emergence of community tourism leaders and given up their control. It contributes to the conflicts and the top-down approach to TAFEA's tourism development. Stronza (2008a) states, "When local residents lack leadership or are ill-prepared to manage tourism for themselves, external actors are more likely to dominate (Stronza, 2008, p. 102)." Moscardo goes further to say that the "power is enhanced when locals are portrayed as lacking tourism expertise and thus requiring the assistance of external agents (Moscardo, 2008, p. 8)." This implies that operators, decision-makers and authorities of tourism development may feel that is a necessity for them to have more control in local tourism and development. External dominance can also manipulate the amount of local participation in the decision-making process, controlling how much and what local residents can decide on (Sofield, 2003, p. 105) (Tosun, 2000, p. 625). This puts the local residents' best interests at a lesser priority in tourism planning and ultimately leading to exclusion from tourism benefits. Stronza (2008) claims that external dominance "perpetuates the marginalization of rural and indigenous communities" and ultimately leads to "problems of social conflict, economic disparities and environmental degradations (Stronza, 2008, p. 102)." Tosun (2000) states that when governments invests largely in developing a "western standard" destination to attract large numbers of an elite tourists, local communities are left out of the initial decision making process and "remain living under the poverty limit"(Tosun, 2000, p. 625).

Literature on Causes of the Problem

Limited Access to Communication

The South Pacific's Small Island developing states (SIDS) economic, social and environmental viability is challenged by disadvantages of small size, insularity, remoteness and vulnerability to natural disasters (Briguglio, 1995, p. 1615). Indivisibilities caused by smallness, geological spreading of islands and a limited range for specialization (Briguglio, 1995, p. 1616)(Sofield, 2003, p. 120) and "infrastructure deficiencies" (Carr et al., 2009, p. 100) make the cost of doing business high in Vanuatu. A dispersed population living on remote scattered islands challenges the delivery of public and private services in Vanuatu. Those who have authority in tourism, its related sectors, and are responsible for tourism development are located in Port Vila. It puts a considerable amount of distance between the capital and TAFEA Province. Therefore, the country must "critically rely on infrastructure services, particularly communications and transport", for developing its outer islands (Carr et al., 2009, p. 96). On TAFEA's remote and rural islands, infrastructure systems are extremely weak. Although mobile services made some improvements to communications, other infrastructure deficiencies make it difficult for development and access to markets. A digital divide and skills to use technologies are major constraints. High costs make existing services unaffordable and therefore used less frequently. Tourism depends on efficient infrastructure services that has a system of physical accessibility and is of quality (Fagence, 1996, p. 98). Remote distances from Port Vila and TAFEA's weak infrastructure create a communication gap between the public and private sector and the local communities. It is causing the knowledge gap in TAFEA and consequently adding to the problem of the locals' exclusion from the tourism development process and tourism market

(Grenna, Lucia; Santi, Emanuele; Scuppa, Gianmarco; Hilbruner, Roberta; Vereczi, Gabor, 2006, p. 7).

Significance of the Problem

The relevance of this research is underpinned by the causes and negative impacts of the NI-Vanuatu people not understanding the ecotourism industry and how it works, even though national tourism has grown. It is stifling ecotourism development in the islands of TAFEA Province and in other provinces. The problem stems from a dispersed population on scattered islands and weak infrastructure, limited access to resources and information in rural areas, and the lack of an effective communication system that links locals to tourism authorities. This has resulted in inappropriate ecotourism planning, leaving local residents unskilled and remaining unknowledgeable about ecotourism enterprise. They lack the capacity to participate in the national tourism market and development. As a result, negative impacts are not managed in the local communities. And, the economic benefits from national tourism growth remain outside of the rural areas, adding to the issues of unequal income distribution and poverty.

Research Purpose

In the past four years, tourism business owners under the TAFEA Tourism Council have taken monumental steps to creating awareness, as a collective group, about their tourism development situations. Several multi-stakeholder workshops were held and there was a realization at the national level that TAFEA Province was displaced from Vanuatu tourism development. Since those workshops, changes have taken place. The national and local government started taking interest and stakeholder relationships began to strengthen. The TAFEA Tourism Council's

continuous small achievements and advancements over other rural islands in Vanuatu led to the benchmarking of TAFEA Province as a model for outer island tourism development. Currently, measures are taken to improve resources and training in TAFEA. This research will investigate video and digital photography as an innovative opportunity for improving ecotourism knowledge in rural areas that may prove rewarding for TAFEA Province and eventually other provinces. The purpose of the research is to examine how participatory methods of using video and digital photography can be utilized in approaches for effective communication of information to rural residents for development and strengthening of local ecotourism enterprises. Findings will be used to encourage Vanuatu development and government agencies and the TAFEA Tourism Council to explore opportunities of integrating the technologies with existing communication tools into ecotourism development programs and projects.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are to find possible solutions for increasing successful local ecotourism businesses that diversify the economy of the TAFEA province; and this would expand the insight of the local residents on cultural and environmental heritage. In order to meet the objectives, three questions guided the research:

1. How can utilizing video and photo technology in TAFEA's local communities promote long term ecotourism sustainability and their ownership of it?
2. How can the community values and traditional culture be integrated into ecotourism through the use of participatory digital video technology?
3. How can incorporating video and digital technology in ecotourism educational and training programs empower local residents to effectively manage local enterprises?

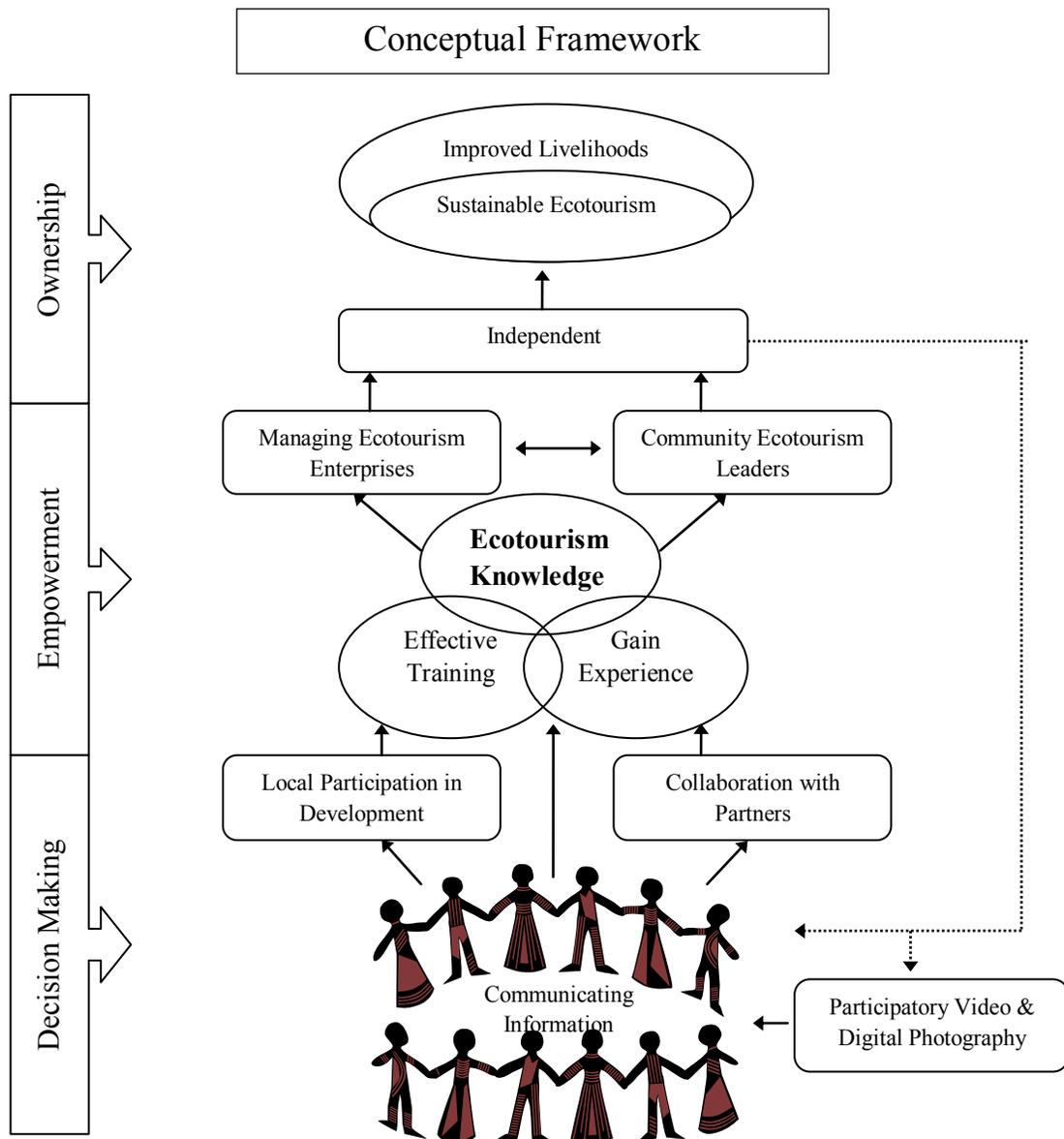


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework Model

The framework shows the different areas and stages of enterprise development that is impacted by video and digital photography used in participatory methods. It also shows that video focuses on the community yet emphasizes the role of the community to achieve the development goals. It shows that community residents' role is equally important in every area and at every stage.

Thesis Statement of Hypothesis

The numerous barriers associated with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the lack of tourism understanding challenges the sustainable outcome of Vanuatu's indigenous ecotourism development in the rural islands. Poor communication infrastructure on these remote islands limits the dissemination and communication of eco-tourism information to rural residents while language and illiteracy impairs their understanding of the information. These limitations results in an ineffective national approach to eco-tourism development that encourages non-cohesive collaboration. As a result rural communities and local stakeholders are left out of the developmental process. Researchers have defined that the alternative bottom – up approach, initiates participation at the local community level. This encourages different stakeholder groups at different levels to collaborate and plan more effectively for eco-tourism sustainability. Introducing participatory use of video as a catalyst of communication initiates participation in local communities. Additionally, the collaboration is impelled by effective reciprocated information between rural communities and other stakeholders resulting in the communities' increase of knowledge and having ownership in their sustainable development.

Definitions of Terms

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is described in many ways from country to country. If one was to research the definition of ecotourism, it would find that show that there is no one common definition. In this paper, the ecotourism definition given by The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2010) is

used. On the TIES website (<http://www.ecotourism.org/>) ecotourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people." The principles that guide the activities that TIES has put in place are:

- “Minimize impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate.”

Vanuatu Tourism

The Department of Tourism (2010) does not specifically define national tourism on their website (<http://www.governmentofvanuatu.gov.vu/government-ministries/>). They state the national vision which is “Tourism celebrates Vanuatu’s culture and environment, empowers its people and captivates its visitors throughout the islands.” Tourism development is guided by the principles:

- “Is sustainable and delivers economic, social and environmental benefits for the people of Vanuatu
- Engages local communities and provides opportunity for increased participation and ownership of tourism businesses by Ni-Vanuatu across all the islands of Vanuatu
- Is built on a partnership between government and private sector and provides an encouraging environment for both local and foreign investment

- Is based on eco-tourism products that delivers a high quality visitor experience and satisfaction and
- Upholds the reputation of the country as the most friendliness destination in the Pacific and ‘Happiest Place on Earth’.”

Community

Blakely and Milano (2001) in “Community Economic Development” describes community as “a defined geography with a set of people who hold common history, beliefs, or regard for the territory in which they reside.” Community in this research is defined as the TAFEA province populations who has interest in ecotourism activities by having the desire to or are partaking in ecotourism activities. The community can be a village or a group that wants to be involved in ecotourism or of ecotourism entrepreneurs such as the Tourism Council, owners of bungalows, or tour guides. Community can be a group of villages or residents associated to a central ecotourism activity, such as the Mt. Yasur Volcano tour, or geographical areas where ecotourism exists. The people living on the islands of TAFEA province collectively can be a community in the context of development.

Sustainable Development

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in the Our Common Future: Towards Sustainable Development Report (1987) describes sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).” The concept of sustainability is noted by the WCED in the report as “sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of

investments, the orientation of technological development; and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations (WCED, 1987).”

Participatory Video

Lunch and Lunch (2006) describes participatory video as “subjects” or locals having control of the camera to make their own film presenting issues that are important to them and the way they want to. They state that the process is “enabling a group or community to take action to solve their own problems and also to communicate their needs and ideas to decision-makers and or other groups and communities (N. Lunch & C. Lunch, 2006, p. 10).” It is community-led learning and sharing exchanges by voicing concerns or telling a story (N. Lunch & C. Lunch, 2006, p. 12). Lie and Mandler (2009) add that is also about “transforming the traditional power structure in video-making and giving stakeholders a greater sense of control and ownership of the medium (Lie & Mandler, 2009, p. 5).”

Literature on Solving the Problem

Approach for Ecotourism Development

Continuous engagement and empowerment of residents can prevent common problems that include conflicts and other negative social and cultural impacts (De Vasconellos Pegas & Stronza, 2008, p. 174). In fact, tourism researchers advocate that these actions and putting local communities in the center of ecotourism development are essential if tourism or variations of it is to become sustainable. A positive course for ecotourism development for Vanuatu is

summarized by De Burlo (1996). He asserts that the Vanuatu government needs to have a “genuine commitment” to a growth strategy that fundamentally:

“supports locals’ rights to resources and power in decision-making about resource use. And, that “local participation in tourism and tourism’s role in promoting development in Vanuatu would be best served by working with local customary groups and assisting them in decision-making about whether to embrace tourism at all, what type, and how to design tourism projects to best conserve local resources and provide an educational—as well as economic—component (De Burlo, 1996, pp. 252-253).”

De Burlo’s approach is widely recommended or the benefits of ecotourism to be localized and negative impacts minimized (Sofield, 2003); (Timothy, 2002);(Cole, 2006); (Moscardo, 2008); (Goodwin, 1998); (Tosun, 2000); (Stronza, 2008); (Denman, 2001).

Realizing the course of development put forth by DeBurlo necessitates residents of local communities in TAFEA Province to have understanding of the ecotourism industry and business concepts. Yet, this is something they are lacking. Cole (2006) and Moscardo (2008) state that if residents of communities are to actively participate in the development process, then it is essential that they have knowledge of how the decision making process and tourism system works (Cole, 2006, p. 631);(Moscardo, 2008, p.8). Sofield (2003) stresses knowledge is equally essential to local residents’ empowerment in tourism development (Sofield, 2003, p. 213). Moscardo (2008) noted that community capacity is a “precondition for any other activity” in tourism. In analyzing 392 tourism development cases, Moscardo found that in destinations of developing rural and marginal regions, “improving community capacity building before the process of tourism planning even begins” will improve the tourism development process and enhance local benefits (Moscardo, 2008, pp. 9-10). Improving the TAFEA residents

understanding of ecotourism and business in the beginning stages, will initiate the process of building communities capacities enabling them to manage enterprises and conservation.

Communication and Participation

TAFEA's indigenous people are strongly bonded to ancestral culture and customs. A social system that is founded on family and extended family networks and land is carefully overseen by chiefs. In Vanuatu disadvantages of remoteness, weak infrastructures, illiteracy and multi-languages create difficulties in structuring communication systems that are accessible and efficient. The disadvantages should not deter efforts although it may make them more difficult. What is imperative to ecotourism development is how the systems are designed and integrated into existing social and physical structures for effective communication that encourages local participation in the development process.

The Vanuatu government will need to include communication systems in their strategies that provide access to necessary information to improve residents' knowledge. The problem that arises from this is that if the government follows the practices that disseminate information only it will lead to shortfalls. It is one-way communication according to Bessette (2007) that pushes ideas and projects onto communities, disregarding to address policies or negative impacts. The end results have little impact and are short lived, whereas, establishing a two-way communication process of sharing information through experience and study improves understanding (Bessette, 2007, p. 81). Balit (2007) explains that knowledge is more than the collection of information; it is "the meaning that people make of information." Furthermore, people's aptitude to make sense of the information relies on their ability to discuss and debate it in opportunities of dialogue (Balit, 2007, p. 106). When implemented, communication becomes the process of the tourism development that DeBurlo (1996) advocates.

Stronza (2008) promotes that “If ecotourism has any real potential as a strategy for conservation and sustainable development, we must better understand the reasons why it succeeds or fails within local communities and from the perspective of local residents (Stronza, 2008, p. 102).” Every community is different and so is their perspective on what their issues are and development should be. Additionally, ecotourism crosses many sectors. Information communicated to TAFEA residents will need to cover the sectors that are involved in or impacted by ecotourism activities in the community. Also, it will need to adapt to the conditions and desires of individual communities. Bessette explains, “Each society must define its own model of development in the light of its specific context, its culture, its resources and its values. And the same is true for the various groups within a given community (Guy Bessette, 2004).” Timonty (2002) and Denman (2001) advocate that it is necessary for indigenous residents to have control in the development because they “have a greater tendency to do it in a way that is in harmony with cultural traditions” and it builds ethnic pride (Timothy, 2002, p. 154); (Denman, 2001, p. 12). Servaes and Malikhao (2007) noted that when information accessed is on the “issues that affect their lives” it is interpreted and evaluated and eventually contributed in the decision-making process (Servaes & Malikhao, 2007, p. 10). Residents are enabled to make correlations of their community issues or needs to the tourism development to have better understanding. The understanding becomes logical backed with substantiation.

In dialogue, information is reciprocated. Both TAFEA residents and tourism authorities are learning about the issues, expectations, desires and concerns related to local ecotourism and business. The significance of situations and decisions become clear and understood. Consequently, the needs for development are identified and well-informed decision can be made

that best serve rural ecotourism (Sofield, 2003, p. 113). By looking at available resources and capabilities, TAFEA residents can then determine if ecotourism is the right choice for them. This is just recognizing that for sustainable development, tourism may not be necessary and that not participating in it “may be a legitimate goal in certain circumstances (Tao & Wall, 2009, p. 90).” And, it is a form of empowerment when communities can decide if tourism is a choice for them or not (Sofield, 2003, p. 110).

Another benefit is implied in Stronza’s (2008) statement noted earlier. That implication is, the exchange of information strengthens the decision-making at all levels of society because the local population, regional and national levels are interdependent (Sofield, 2003, p. 62). All involved stakeholders will gain degrees of knowledge and experience from effective communication and TAFEA residents’ participation in the decision-making process. Residents and communities capacities will build to assume full control of tourism operations (Stronza, 2008, p. 103), enhancing the ability for the benefits to remain localized and negative impacts minimized. Rocharungsat (2008) advocates that reaching sustainable goals requires continuous community participation; awareness and education are essentials at every stage (Rocharungsat, 2008, p. 69).

Collaboration

Conservation and development have positive potentials when local residents have control of the choice and course of their own tourism development as empowered leaders and decision makers (Stronza, 2008, p. 102). Accessing resources at the local level accommodates residents’ needs for improved knowledge and empowerment to make and carry out decisions. A communication network that gives locals equal access to markets, finances, education and tourist is vital

(Timothy, 2002, p. 161). Partnering with authorities and experts for learning will increase confidence and encourage leadership. According to Sofield (2003), the transference of knowledge and balancing of power in relationships relies on it. Sofield states that in tourism development empowerment can be regarded as

“a multi-dimensional process that provides communities with a consultative process often characterized by the input of outside expertise; the opportunity to learn and to choose; the ability to make decisions; the capacity to implement/apply those decision; acceptance of responsibility for those decisions and action and their consequences; and outcomes directly benefitting the community and its members, not diverted or channeled into other communities and/or their members (Sofield, 2003, p. 112).

The success of TAFEA’s residents’ full, authentic participation and local initiatives depends on the fusion of local and national level collaborations.

Commitment

The most critical investment is the willingness of stakeholders at all levels to genuinely commit to supporting communication, participation and collaboration for local independency (Sofield, 2003, p. 111). Improving the development process and enhancing the benefits in TAFEA’s communities will take a cohesive effort. According to Grenna et al. (2006), a well-designed communication strategy “incorporated into projects at the onset” is vital for overall successful development.

“the strategy should identify how information sharing, awareness-building, advocacy, networking, and conflict mitigation will be woven throughout all tourism development activities, and should fully integrate the art and science of communication with the other

project technical skills needed for planning, implementing and evaluating project activities in the sustainable tourism sector (Grenna, et al., 2006, p. 25)

Achieving community initiatives, communication, and tourism development objectives suggested by DeBurlo and in the research will take short and long term social interactions. Also, communication systems and tools that give desired technical information need to be accessible at the community level. For the Vanuatu government to implement supportive approaches, a degree of decentralization of powers of the central government to local government is necessary (Tosun, 2000, p. 618). To orchestrate the production and delivery of the processes will take time, finance, and committed partnerships.

Bridging the Knowledge Gap

There are a variety of media tools for communication. Traditional media are culturally embedded such as, storytelling, theater and songs. Mass media are the newspapers, television, internet and radio. Media used in groups include video, photographs, posters, and drawings. Bessette (2004) stated that communication media that are interpersonal support the process of participation. And, the tools selection is based on two-way communication and how it relates to the intention of the work and the people the work is for Bessette (2004). Tufte and Mefalopulos (2007) advocated for an “integrated and project-oriented model” that combines communication approaches inside a “flexible framework.” They state that no matter of purpose or sector, the initial stages require dialogue with all stakeholders to identify and research problems. Afterwards, any appropriate approaches, such as information dissemination, social marketing, advocacy and mobilizing are used as intended actions to follow (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, p. 14). Therefore, the communication tools may change at different stages or need to be flexible.

Digital Video

The versatility of video utilized in a participatory way can be an effective social and educational tool for individual and group development (N. Lunch & C. Lunch, 2006); (S. A. White, 2003a) ; (Lie & Mandler, 2009) ; (Shaw & Robertson, 1997). White (2003b) stated that video is a tool that aids and facilitates the interaction that enables self-expression and people's realization of their abilities and potential (S. A. White, 2003b, p. 64). It has transformed people to become active subjects from less passive objects, "shaping their life space through knowledge and action (S. A. White, 2003c, p. 34)." Participants are doing rather than observing. Generally, the camera and filming or photography is in the hands of locals, in their own environment, and under the guidance of practitioners and researchers. Information is compiled and presented in a way that they see it, can understand it and can accept it (Lie & Mandler, 2009, p. 7). The process facilitates horizontal and vertical dialogue exchanges between actors at different levels, engaging residents or stakeholders in sharing their views, discussing them and negotiating. It can be empowering, however, it is important to know that video and photography are tools and empowerment comes from within (Bery, 2003, p. 105) It comes from a transfer of power relations(S. A. White, 2003c, p. 54); (Sofield, 2003, p. 341). People are dealing with problems and situations of conflict and competition that affect more than one person. Using video in a participatory way can give equitable voice so that needs are addressed in a sustainable manner (Lie & Mandler, 2009, p. 13)). And, it "creates a safe space for people to speak" more comfortably about their stories, issues and desires from their perspectives in their own environment (Lie & Mandler, 2009, p. 17).

When video is used at the beginning stages of planning, local stakeholders' priorities, conditions, concerns and expectations can be revealed (N. Lunch & C. Lunch, 2006, p. 78) playing a critical

role (Chin Saik Yoon, 1996). The residents as a group watch their production and revelations can happen. Seeing themselves can make connections to identities that may not have been clear before. They become consciences about “personal and community needs” (S. A. White, 2003c, p. 64) anchoring cultural identities. Being able to discuss and considered these revelations in decision making from a new perspective, empowers them to build their own future (S. A. White, 2003c, p. 37).

Video is used to meet the goals of interventions by encouraging people through the process for change. Lie and Mandler list in their typology the main strategic categories video is used for:

- Awareness raising and advocacy
- Stakeholder engagement and action
- Capacity building
- Reporting and data collection (Lie & Mandler, 2009, p. 5. 6)

How video is used in these categories depends on the context of the intervention and situations of the community. According to Lie and Mandler (2009), there are three that are commonly used with video: “participatory video” (<http://insightshare.org/>), “zooming in–zooming” by Van Mele (2006) and “visual problem appraisal” described by Witteveen and Enserink (2007).

Video used in a participatory way incorporates the concept of local context for better understanding. For instance, when local language and media is used in indigenous communities where illiteracy and language is a barrier, visuals images become “powerful tools” for communication and understanding (Balit, 2007, p. 111). Even though local residents may not be experts in making a video, they are experts in community life; knowledge that is critical in the process (Chavez et al., 2004, p. 400). Oettle and Koelle (2003) define this knowledge as

indigenous knowledge which evolves from cultural traditions and lifestyles. They explain that it is necessary to share information in ways that are consistent with what indigenous people know, they can easily access, and can understand. Additionally, they state, “common language, culture and economic and physical circumstances make the process more accessible (Oettle & Koelle, 2003).” Video used in a participatory way can be a highly effective tool, engaging “marginalized people to help them implement their own forms of sustainable development based on their local needs (N. Lunch & C. Lunch, 2006, p. 10).”

Digital Photography

Video and photography are similar tools used in similar ways. Photography can have the same effect as video (Bessette, 2004). Experience reveals that they share the same purpose of being used in a participatory way to encourage positive change for individuals and groups. According to Bessette (2004), pictures are used by local residents to express their point of view in a photo story. With or without text, they can illustrate good or problem situations. It can be just as effective as video in starting discussion, sharing ideas and useful in making decisions (Guy Bessette, 2004). In photography, Wang and Burris (1997) state: photovoice and photo novella (<http://www.photonovela.com/>) are commonly used (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 369). Another medium found throughout literature is digital storytelling (<http://www.storycenter.org>).

Literature shows that video and photography has a long history in indigenous community development. Success stories in the fields of women empowerment and enterprise development, such as SEWA (www.sewa.org); community advocacy and land rights as with Fogo Island, commonly known as the Fogo Process (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/snowden/index.cfm?pid=fogo>); political rights and cultural identity of the Kayapo Indians (Dagron, 2001); and environmental

and agricultural capacity building around the world, are cited in various publications of development organizations, such as the FAO, UN, IIED and UNECSO. The advancements in media technology have created more enthusiasm to use video and photography as a tool in development. Producing digital videos and photographs is easier, simpler and affordable. Video and photography are tools that can be used in local communities and by members themselves (Bessette, 2004). The equipments used: cameras, audio recorders, computers and generators are mobile, adaptable, and accessible. Its mobility, adaptability, low costs and ease of use make it an appropriate suggestion to use in TAFEA's communities. Incorporating it with existing mass and social media can widen the outreach of intervention in rural communities. The learning benefits from using video and photographs to convey and document messages are enhanced when used in a participatory way and with local traditional media (Balit, 2007, p. 109).

Description of Research

Community assessments conducted in public forum workshops collected qualitative data on issues, strength and weaknesses in TAFEA's ecotourism development. The three workshops involved stakeholder participation at three different levels. The first workshop represented government and tourism stakeholders at the national, provincial, and community level. The second workshop represented the rural communities of Aneityum Island. The third workshop represented a community village on Tanna Island. The data collected from all three workshops and personal involvement in tourism development in TAFEA was used to form a portrayal of ecotourism problems, specifically to needs development. This information, along with secondary research on Vanuatu, was used to determine the causes of the problems. In this

research, digital video and photography as a tool for communication used in participatory fashion is explored as a possible opportunity to aid in improving TAFEA locals' ecotourism and business knowledge. Four examples of case studies that relate to ecotourism development taken from literature review will show how the tools are used for knowledge sharing and skills development. This analysis will look into how the technology can assist in building resident's and community capacities to participate in Vanuatu's tourism market. The focus is placed on introducing the technology for awareness at the critical initial stages of development and in training throughout the development process. Additionally, there is an attempt to show how TAFEA local residents can benefit from practices of incorporating video and photography into communication strategies.

Communication Tool: Digital Video and Photography

Communication at the Initial Stages

"Skownan First Nation"

A representation of the premise and power of video in community assessment is depicted by Ashford and Perry (2001) in their written report and the community videos of a land use and natural resource management project for Canadian Aboriginals. The province placed a land protection on an area of forest on behalf of the Skownan people for a bison economic activity; however, it limited their range of land-use on the reserve. The community desired more income opportunities that are cultural related and fit into their livelihood systems. Appreciative inquiry and participatory video were the communication strategies for leading the Skownan First Nation through a process of discovery on how they value their land. One outcome of the project was the

community's realization that ecotourism can conserve the land and culture while generating income for a large population of the community.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development's (IISD) objectives in the project were to identify community values with respect to the forest; express them to stakeholder decision makers; and encourage discussion at all levels on incorporating the values into land and resource planning and management. A Skownan team was formed to manage the project. To give the community control and ownership, the team chose the videographers, what was asked in the interviews, and finalized the video production. Additionally, an Aboriginal video company and cultural leaders were engaged to work with the Skownan team. A small group of selected youth was trained in a co-learning environment on appreciative inquiry and participatory video to document the interviews and meetings. During mock interviews in training sessions, the community decided that a framework of video production collecting stories was more beneficial than facts. Participants also determined their own objectives that centered on: reconnecting and mobilizing people to create and implement a collective vision; educating the community and children on cultural heritage and land-use; building partnerships with outside agencies; and becoming more independent, socially and economically.

Over an 18 month period, three separate interviews and three analysis workshops took place. Informal interviews collected stories from over 100 residents. Audio was transcribed as oral history. Video interviews were taken in informal settings, mostly homes. There was a gender balance and representation of all age groups. The interviewees used their language of choice. Information collected related to their greatest experiences on the land and community and why the activities were valued. Other question topics revolved around their feelings of the economic

and cultural benefits of the activities. Data analysis workshops allowed community discussion on recorded material in which they based their visions for the community. Finalized video shoots were done by the youth with community team leaders before presenting them at the workshops. The Skownan Chief and Council gave input on how to effectively use the videos to positively impact the people's development. Distributing videos to all households enhanced community involvement and support which furnished clear paths for the project to move forward.

The final results went beyond the intended objectives stated at the beginning. It led to the vision themes that centered on reconnecting the people to the land through planting trees, recreation and health, community and youth education, and continued traditional learning of cultural practices. The Skownan participatory video "Skownan and Dreaming" on the IISD website (<http://www.iisd.org/ai/waterhen.htm>), references the communities economic development visions in the areas of fishing, hunting, small agriculture, crafts and incorporating all of those into ecotourism enterprises. Two focus group workshops connected community representatives with outside decision-makers to strengthen collaborations. Presentations of the participatory videos gave authorities "a better understanding of aboriginal values and the importance of their inclusion in the decision-making (Ashford & Perry, 2001, p. 11)." It also allowed for discussion how future initiatives in the community can take place and changes for improved community involvement in future decision-making. The process assisted the community in indentifying actions for moving forward with livelihood development planning that included ecotourism. Plan considerations include: using appreciative inquiry and participatory video in future community initiatives; use current and produce more videos for children and adult education;

and establish ways to keep the energy of the community high for future development. Some revelations from the focus group discussions centered around needs for strengthening partnerships, interactive collaborations with authorities, increasing authorities awareness on aboriginal culture and traditions for better development and policies. There also admittance that tourism opportunity for the Skownan community was lost to “non-native society” because the Skownan people were not consulted first.

Participatory video and appreciative inquiry were important in the Skownan values assessment process. Residents found appreciative interview inquiry a useful tool for creating “understanding and building on aboriginal values” effectively “drawing out” the common values and “inward looking visions” for their future development. It allowed for the creation of visions that used community human resources rather than depending on outsiders (Ashford & Perry, 2001, p. 9).

Participatory video had a more substantial role in the process. Ashford and Perry (2001) reported that participatory video was “widely viewed” as the “strongest component of the project.” Participatory video effectively conveyed the Skownan people’s lifestyle, beliefs, and how they used their land were effectively conveyed through video. The focus group thought it was a powerful expression of local values and aspirations (Ashford & Perry, 2001, p. 12).

Remarks from participants and researchers on how participatory video affected the research suggest that its role was significant in drawing out common values and creating locals understanding. It had the ability to facilitate participation, to portray the culture, and to improve local confidence. According to the report, participatory video facilitated and increased participation in the following ways:

- People liked the production and reviewing the videos. They drew people to participate in the meetings, held their interest throughout the project, and increased the profile of the project in the community.
- Having trained youth conduct interviews and lead the community consultation process proved useful. Local interviewers already have the community trust. It promoted inclusion of underrepresented members. It connected the youth and elders.
- Involving the Chief and Council in the appreciative interviews and meeting raised public visibility of the project.
- The videos allowed for more informed discussions between community members and senior decision makers.

Participatory video contributed to improve understanding which lead to informed discussion in the following ways:

- After watching already taped videos before being interviewed, participants understood what was being asked of them by the interviewer creating stronger discussion in the interview.
- Local facilitator's knowledge of the community and ability to speak local language "enriched" interview discussions increasing its effectiveness.
- Interviewing locals while performing tasks or on the land relaxed people, helping them to remain focused in the interview.
- "Video can facilitate discussion on sensitive issues by contributing to a non-confrontational atmosphere."

Participatory video contributed to effectively portray the local culture and environment in the contents of the video in the following ways:

- Interviews done in local language “often provided richer information and stories.”
- Local facilitator’s knowledge of the community and ability to speak local language “enriched” interview discussions increasing its effectiveness.
- Interviewing locals while performing tasks in their community environment and land relaxed people, helping them to remain focused on interviewing and

Ashford and Perry (2001) stated, “Comments made at the focus groups support IISD’s belief that video has the following strengths over the more traditional method of report-writing (Ashford & Perry, 2001, p. 4).”

- Local people can describe their value system in their own words.
- The camera is mobile and allows for descriptive visuals of forest values.
- Emotion and meaning is communicated in the video.
- Locals can speak and listen from their own environment comfortably, “bridging cultures easily and effectively.”
- Video overcame differences in literacy and language, communicating directly to broad audiences.

Participatory video had a major influence in keeping the inquiry process in a local context for people to better understand their values. Residents as the “subjects” and designers of the framework for and controllers of videotaping—a principle of participatory video—contextualized the activities to the local culture and environment. Visual images enhanced the residents understanding of interview questions to construct informed responses. It had the same effect in meeting discussions and decisions; thus, together with the questions enlightened locals of their respected values. The process helped the Skownan aboriginals make economic and social development connections to cultural and natural resource conservation. It also began the

process of empowerment. They were enabled to design their own project objectives and holistic community visions around their values. It identified areas of important needs of the community related to their visions that they communicated to authorities to invoke their assistance. They gained skills to use again in other areas and for other initiatives. The Skownan First Nation realized the potential benefits in using participatory videos for educational purposes in their schools and for adult education. Their vision plans included the use video for educating the youth on traditional activities, continued documentation of custom practices, and to generate income. Also, a proposal was submitted to devise a teacher's guide on participatory video that could be used in high schools anywhere in Canada. The videos "Skownan – Our Land, Our Future" and "Skownan – Dreaming the Land" are located on the IISD's Appreciative Inquiry and Community Development website (<http://www.iisd.org/ai/waterhen.htm>).

The practices in this project can be used to edify approaches in TAFEA's ecotourism development, especially at the critical initial stages. Using participatory video as a communication tool can assist TAFEA residents' to better understanding how they value their culture so they can incorporate plans to protect it in their ecotourism development. As with the Skownan First Nation, TAFEA residents can benefit if it is done before ecotourism planning. Denman (2001) notes that feasibility assessment should be initialized before strategies begin to determine its potential in the community (Denman, 2001, p. 6). Tao and Wall (2009) state that tourism will change the way locals use and value their resources and activities. It is a necessity that they are evaluated and understood in the place where they occur by locals and not only by external agents. Tao and Wall emphasize that "only when communities understand themselves

and their abilities in their own terms can they begin to evaluate decisions relating to external features such as tourism (Tao & Wall, 2009, p. 91).

Direct signs of Ni-Vanuatu traditions currently being compromised in TAFEA province are evident on Aneityum and Tanna. Yet, ecotourism should not compromise the community's indigenous culture and environment but encourage the citizens to value their cultural heritages (Vincent & Thompson, 2002, p. 12). Participatory video integrated into other interactive strategies, such as appreciative inquiry, can heighten TAFEA residents' consciousness of community values and resource. It can increase the possibilities of a future ecotourism that is sustainable, profitable, and culturally valued. Walker (2008) explains that it can add value to and care of place that increases locals control in a holistic development and capacity building. Furthermore, the understanding contributes to: choosing a proper tourism product (Walker, 2008, p. 91). TAFEA residents will be able to correlate their values to appropriate ecotourism activities, like the Skownan community. The possible outcomes of this are that TAFEA residents will no longer have the perspective that tourism can only provide income opportunities. They will begin to see ecotourism as a course to other opportunities that can fit in and improve their livelihoods systems. Diverse ecotourism products and those that support it are created and not the overly saturated bungalow enterprises that currently exist. Emerging results can contribute to a wider and holistic development. By partnering ecotourism with wider sustainable development strategies it increases opportunities to localize benefits for poverty elimination (Goodwin, 1998); (Denman, 2001, p. 3).

TAFEA residents can also increase understanding of their values and network to collectively reduce and prevent potential negative impacts of ecotourism while generating income. Residents who are emotionally involved in conservation; they will want to educate tourists, tourism agencies and government about their values to promote responsible ecotourism (Grenna, et al, 2006, p. 24). Participatory videos and photography can communicate those messages in an appropriate way that captivates the intended audiences. The knowledge exchanges enrich the locals and tourists experience and encourage the right behavior for conservation (Grenna, et al, 2006, p. 24).

“Elemento Natural”

A project guided by a Costa Rican organization offers an example of how photography is used in a cultural exchange and community-based tourism project to improve education of young students and that of tourists. The organization “Elemento Natural” in Costa Rica selected 22 indigenous children of two schools to take pictures for a photo expo. This was a project to assist the schools in raising funds to improve their buildings and educational materials. The aim was to provide cultural exchanges through children eyes between the population of large Costarican cities, tourists and the small indigenous communities of the represented schools. The project allowed the students to learn about life in the city and share experiences of their life the photos. Funds were raised for the students to fully participate in the activities. The children used disposable cameras to take pictures of their families, communities and nature as requested. Fifty photos chosen by professional photographers were displayed at their expo that was sponsored by the ministry of Culture. The children were sent to the expo to raise awareness on the project and

their community. The expo moved outward to companies and organizations to create even greater awareness.

In the next phase and objective of the project, bookmarkers and post cards were made from the children's photos and sold to raise funds. Funds generated went to support the schools. Improvements to the schools infrastructure and computers, internet and DVDs were purchased. One school was retrofitted for electricity and purchased their first computer. The other school replaced old visual and computer equipment. To further their goal of cultural exchange and help the communities, tour visits to the communities and the schools were created and a third community was added. The awareness made from the photo expo help to promote the school and communities. In one village, tourists spend time with the children and volunteer at the school. At the second village, tourists shop for handicrafts and visit a local lodge. The third village has a local museum, handicrafts to sell and a park. All tours are locally operated and use local merchants with profits going to the communities. The project is also a 2010 Innovation Award Finalist, an award given by The International Ecotourism Society. The project is posted on their travel website page (<http://www.yourtravelchoice.org/2010/08/2010-innovation-award-finalist-elemento-natural/>). Video of the project and photos can be seen on Youtube and at <http://www.costaricaunida.com/> in Spanish.

Video and photography used in a participatory way promotes horizontal communication to include underrepresented community members and members of other communities in the awareness or process. Individuals find the camera exciting which can stimulates TAFEA's residents, including women and youth, to become involved in different conservation and tourism

projects. It can help TAFEA residents neutralize issues in their communities so that they can work together for common goals. Using the camera can provide opportunities in TAFEA for youth in a climate were nationally, youth are jobless, dropouts and make up 50% of Vanuatu's population. It can motivate TAFEA's youth and women to become ecotourism entrepreneurs close to home or use new skills to train others. Learning to use video technology and computers can be a beginning step to learning other aspects of computers that can be useful in tourism, such as creating advertisements, marketing materials and blogs.

Communication in Education and Training

The training needs in rural and remote indigenous communities are different than in urban areas. The integration of indigenous knowledge into training projects can add efficiency to techniques in environmental and ecotourism management training. Berrigan states that local knowledge can mean project viability; without it, it's a wasted investment (Berrigan, 1981, p. 26). The assimilation of best practices from modern and conventional ways for training in the community or in a class setting can be done with video and photographs. The goal is for members to discuss the relation of it with their own experience and share with others and not to just explain a skill (Bessette, 2004). Digital video and photography can foster creativity for innovative interventions for education and skills development.

World development organizations that support agriculture and ecosystem development, such as the IIED, and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) are recognized for using participatory media and engagement in education and skills training of rural groups. Coldevin (2003) explains that in FAO project experiences, farmer-led groups pinpoint educational and training needs through examining their experiences. They share their knowledge with experts until practical applications are defined. A benefit is the applications are founded on

indigenous knowledge but infused with new technologies that fit into the daily local life (Coldevin, 2003, pp. 3-4). Coldevin further stated that video is the preferred choice of group media used in FAO participatory farmer training. Information and activities are communicated through video and hands on peer-learning. When video is joined with booklets or other media, it increases the ability to learn; varying the emphasis and giving options for processing information (Coldevin, 2003, p. 13). A substantial amount of small community projects around the world that included video technology and participation has turned into regional and national initiatives, for instance, CESPAC in Peru, PRODERITH in Mexico, CESPAC in Mali, and Digital Green in India. The next two cases, one in Africa and the other in Australia give two different representations of how video application is intergraded into learning and training packages that can build capacity at different stages and in various sectors in ecotourism development.

“CELAC”

The Collecting and Exchange of Local Agricultural Content (CELAC) project in Uganda networks farmers to improve the livelihoods of rural farmers, especially women. The program combines peer-to-peer education and knowledge sharing with a range of communication technologies that collect, disseminates, and manages information of grassroots agricultural practices. Phone text messaging, radio call-in programs, video and DVD, newsletters, and website blogs are commonly used.

Karamagi and Nakiryia (2009), explain that in the process, farmers who are mostly woman, register as community groups and receive seed funding for income generating activities after joining a district network. A community member becomes a Village Knowledge Broker (VKB) to represent the group. This person is trained to collect, store, evaluate and share agricultural

information in their communities. They are supported and attend adult literacy classes. The VKB main responsibility is to pass information to and from the community between Knowledge Share Forums and CELAC. Video is used to document and distribute farming technique presentation from district and community Knowledge Share Forums. Information on effective agriculture practices are collected at district Sharing Knowledge Forums and from the small community forums. The forums bring multi-level stakeholders and group farmers together to discuss and give inputs on themed topics in agriculture. This is to share local farming methods and introduce modern techniques that may work in rural areas. Farmers choose the topics and invite knowledgeable farmers on to attend. The farmers facilitate full and complete participatory discussions on farming methods in the selected topic. The group is assisted in documenting the discussed methods using video, audio, laptop and writing materials. The final outcomes are distributed to farmers groups and farmers.

CELAC's website (<http://www.celac.or.ug>) describes how video and other communication tools are used in the program. The CELAC team assists farmers in using the video with audio, laptop and writing materials to document the data on DVD. Video also captures cultural media such as, music, dance, and drama to convey farming practices, concepts and issues. DVDs are distributed to farmers, NGO's, and government organizations for further learning. DVDs and audio CDs are combined with print educational materials for informal and non-formal training. Visual and audio information is also put on a blog for farmers to access and download. Monthly radio call in programs extends the coverage of information. Phone text messaging with agriculture information is sent every week to farmers from CELAC; farmers frequently text each other. Information on the website is accessible online or offline for those how have internet and those

who do not. Karamagi and Nakiryra state that using the right tools for knowledge exchanges and local content increased outputs and diversified income activities. Farmers were able to meet family needs such as, education, medical care and building permanent houses (Karamagi & Nakiryra, 2009, p. 64).

“Top End Groove”

In Australia, an extensive research program for improving informal vocational education and training for indigenous people included an array of pilot projects that centralized on indigenous engagement and visual and e-learning technology. Top End Groove, one of the pilot projects, assisted very remote indigenous owners and operators to improve their tourism businesses. The project, a part of the Australian Flexible Learning Framework and Indigenous Engagement project, focused on knowledge sharing, skills training access and providing an outlet to promote and market indigenous tourism. The report “Case study > Indigenous Engagement > NT > 2006 Top End Groove” from the Flexible Learning website (<http://flexiblelearning.net.au/>) outlined the activities of the project. According to the report, the e-learning project joined existing and new indigenous businesses to support one another through networking, mentoring and on selling. It provided tourism owners with technology information and development for strengthening rural tourism businesses. It created a tourism business owned web portal for marketing and promoting businesses and initiatives. And, it provided an online skill assessment for business owners. The program extended throughout the northern region of Australia and established five training centers in remote areas. 32 Indigenous stakeholders from remote to extremely remote areas were actively involved throughout the process. Other interested locals were able to tap into the available resources through the primary participants.

Videos put on the internet and CD-ROM made valuable information from indigenous peers and tailored made training modules easily accessible for learning. Indigenous business owners denied access to internet benefited from using video and computer technology to improve their tourism businesses. The report highlighted how some business owners used their new skills to create digital video and photograph stories to help their tourism businesses. One owner used it help start his business by making it part of his business proposal presentation. A second business owner archived cultural knowledge and regional plants in English and native language. It became a digital story resource, promotional tool and learning tool for others. Another used the internet to develop and coordinate a project for developing tourism products. He worked with a trainer to create digital stories for training guides and e-learning training tools. Digital stories were also used for skills assessments.

The project improved indigenous businesses by engaging the primary tourism business owners to have a more “client focused and driven” training. They gave considerable input in various areas, such as, strategic design of project, website, resource tools and policies to mold the type of training they desired. This contributed to training design that focused on the needs of the indigenous owners and to interactive peer–learning and mentoring in their communities. Selected individual owners of Indigenous tourism enterprise were trained to lead the projects in their regions. The presence of local tourism operators as project leaders added credibility to the programs and drew in local participants. The leaders were trained on how to use video and ICT technology to develop and maintain the projects in their areas.

The report emphasizes the most significant outcome was indigenous business owners complete ownership of the project. All training, website decisions and website design were made by the indigenous participants. They provided photos, designs and computer services. All project leaders, mentors and trainers were indigenous people. Participants decided on training information in which individual training plans were made. All had access to update their material on the website and to approve information before posting. Some participants and tour guides developed their own website. The project moved under the Charles Darwin University who is hosting the website as part of tourism training programs. According to Wallace et al. (2009), indigenous tourism operators are being trained to administrate the website themselves to manage their own material, web content, and blogs (Wallace, Manado, Agar, & Curry, 2009, p. 112). Information can be found on the ICT Enhanced Learning and Teaching blog spot dated August 20, 2010 (<http://ictelt.blogspot.com/>) and the Australian Flexible Learning website.

Wallace, Manado, Adgar and Curry (2009) examined the commonalties in the outcomes of the five projects that included Top End Groove. Like top End groove, the focus of the projects was to work from aboriginal's strengths and knowledge to develop relevant business skills through community engagement partnered with industry support. The project collection included tourism and tourism related enterprise businesses. They incorporated the use of digital technology and digital literacy to determine its role in sharing knowledge and work-based learning. The Indigenous participants used video camera and computers to document their stories and the progression and results of the projects. Digital technology was also used as components for communication and in work based learning activities in the individual projects.

In a submission of their findings, Wallace et al. (2009) highlighted important collective themes and outcomes from the various projects. An important factor at the beginning was making sure the participant's community and businesses were the center of the projects purpose. This was to establish community participation and partnerships in real life activities and businesses. They mentioned that peer-to-peer interaction in developing training programs contributed to successful designs of training programs for indigenous tourism owners. Experienced business owners partnered with and mentored community participants which enhanced learning and produced specific goals for achievements. Elders and indigenous experts were significant in the partnerships for local content and knowledge. Working together, assessments were made through back and forth exchanges between communities, owners and professional trainer consultants. These exchanges molded appropriate and qualified training programs that met the needs of the owner and their business which led to success (Wallace et al., 2009, p. 116). Furthermore, Indigenous community residents and business owners freedom to make decisions and to negotiate the development of their training programs, increased their self-esteems and motivation. They were able to continue addressing challenges and develop strategies for their future. Their raised esteem along with continuous "customized training and mentoring" strengthened relationships of "mutual understanding and trust" which they credited to the participatory efforts of the indigenous trainers (Wallace et al., 2009, p. 116).

Wallace et al. (2009) stated that using digital literacy systems and resources provided "considerable opportunities to work in new ways" with the local communities (Wallace et al., 2009, p. 118). Its accessibility and ease to operate in remote areas allowed participants to use digital technology for documentation of activities and stories with video and photographs. They

were used to make e-portfolios. In addition, the flexibility of using audio, visual and written text allowed the indigenous people to construct their own way of exhibiting their competencies. The approach was based on their knowledge systems and expectations and gave precise depictions of indigenous knowledge. This created opportunities for both the indigenous people in tourism businesses and the project consultants.

Wallace et al. claimed that digital visual technology supported communication for sharing knowledge and indigenous learning by overcoming language barriers and different knowledge systems. In the projects, participants were allowed to decide how to use the technology for training and surprising ways to “share ideas” and put them into use in the business came forward (Wallace et al., 2009, p. 118). Also, learning how to operate video cameras and computers to produce films or documentation for the internet is developing a skill in itself. The Indigenous business owners and trainers were able to continue utilizing programs in their businesses, adding to them and developing new ones, eventually to become future trainers themselves (Wallace et al., 2009, p. 119). Another benefit was that making the most of using multimedia in normal business operations, demonstrating competence, and training “built the capacity and resources for that enterprise (Wallace et al., 2009, p. 118).”

The presented examples illustrate the benefits that can emerge in rural education and training when sustainability issues and policies are unified with concepts of video and photography for knowledge exchange. Incorporating similar methods in TAFEA’s school systems can address communities’ desire to incorporate local culture in school curriculum. For instance, photo exhibits or community films shown at a secondary school museum on Tanna can enrich cultural

exchanges, students cultural studies, preserve customs, and provide added school income. It promotes fun learning for ecotourism awareness.

The examples exhibit similarities in video usage in the Skownan project. It demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of digital technology in development that can facilitate residents' participation in the decision-making. Peer learning and knowledge brokers/centers in rural areas can contribute to TAFEA's residents overall sustainability through empowerment, ownership and independency. It can alleviate Vanuatu's future issues of the lack of skilled workers and trainers. Especially, if training programs are not only technical but, related to management and planning and incorporate indigenous knowledge. It connects external agents and local individuals or groups for constant collaboration strengthening enterprises and changing policies. Combining video, Ni-Vanuatu people, and local media to facilitate and communicate educational and training activities can promote credibility and better understanding of information; therefore, community support. Using video and computer technology makes access to the information accessible in rural areas possible; overcoming TAFEA's disadvantages of remote islands and poor infrastructures. Combining the visual images and audio with Tanna radio and Vanuatu broadcast can enhance effectiveness of awareness initiatives.

The use of video, photography and computer technology with peer-learning guided by external experts can assist TAFEA residents in realizing that ecotourism is a business. This is important to quality control and sustainable enterprises. Grenna et al. (2006) note that before starting an ecotourism enterprise indigenous people need to have a "business-related" outlook and more professional approach (Grenna et al., 2006, p. 9). Additionally, the combination encourages

collaborations through real partnerships that can help TAFEA's local residents achieve development that is appropriate for their livelihood goals. Stronza (2008b) explains that when local residents are linked to external tourism agents and NGOs, there is a unification of "tourism industry and globalized economy" knowledge and "long-held and intimate knowledge of ecosystems and traditions." Furthermore, when this type of collaboration includes with it capacity building and residents ability to make decisions, it enable locals to undertake complete control of tourism operations (Stronza, 2008, p. 103).

Summary and Conclusion

Restatement of the Problem

Depriving TAFEA's indigenous residents from access to communication suppresses their potential and opportunity to become beneficiaries of an improved quality of life from responsible ecotourism. The research in this thesis revealed that although information has been introduced to improve local knowledge of tourism, the fundamental barriers have gone unnoticed. The basis of these barriers has not been studied in depth in Vanuatu's tourism development; consequently, the total potential, especially in the rural areas has not been realized. Proactive strategies with innovative processes do not exist. The aim of the research was to explore applications of digital video and photography technology in communication strategies as an option for effectively improving TAFEA's Ni-Vanuatu residents' knowledge of ecotourism and business concepts.

Major Findings

This research discovered relationships between concepts of using participatory methods of digital video and photography for communication and approaches to improving ecotourism and business knowledge of indigenous people. The similarities are in the cultivation of local context,

local participation in decision-making, stakeholder collaboration, empowerment and local control in the process, all of which are essential for sustainable ecotourism development. In other words, the technology can promote interactive communication which is how knowledge is improved and how community ecotourism can achieve sustainability. Positive outcomes can be maximized when introducing the described digital technology in educational and assessment projects at the preliminary stages of development. Local residents understanding that the impact and consequences of their choices enable them to make informed decisions for the desired future development. Training packages can build capacity in ways that are culturally acceptable. The financial investment in purchasing the digital technology is minimal. However, the process of transferring technical skills and knowledge to locals and ensuring participation takes time and finances. The research has shown that the benefits can contribute to long lasting sustainable development. As in the case of the “Skownan First Nation,” participatory video integrated cultural perspectives in community assessments. Residents were enabled to build and propose ecotourism goals with regard to custom and traditions. Participatory video promoted community independence, residents demonstrating initiative and determination in obtaining their objectives. Digital Video Technology used in the “Top End Groove” and “CELAC” projects promoted peer learning that allowed for more indigenous management in enterprise development. These highlights refer back to DeBurlo’s suggestion for sustainable tourism development in Vanuatu’s rural islands. Therefore, investments should not be discouraging, but planned for. Using this technology in relation to the culture environment and the developmental objectives can positively influence how TAFEA residents learn. When done in a participatory way, it can improve local knowledge of ecotourism and build their capacity in the context of their culture; putting them on the path to controlling their ecotourism development.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Improving local knowledge of ecotourism systems and business concepts depends on effective communication systems that allow for local participation in the decision-making process and local market. Digital video and photography are effective and innovative communication tool to facilitate the process. Their ability to disseminate information and stimulate two-way communication and local engagement creates an incentive to further explore its use in awareness and training initiatives. Digital technology can enhance the learning process; in combination with participatory methods, it can localize ecotourism benefits. Effectively improving local knowledge will need further study in the area of designing and developing communication schemes, investigating pre-conditions, resources and potential partnerships. Another area of additional research is to implement a study in a TAFEA rural community to examine potential impacts of digital video technology. Consideration by the Vanuatu government, partnering NGOs, and TAFEA Tourism Council should be given this proposal to further improve local ecotourism and social development. It is hoped that the national and TAFEA's local government can be inspired to revive existing communication tools of local radio and traditional media to spread ecotourism awareness, and incorporate these types of media with digital technology. This research suggests that the result would be a more effective strategy for community development.

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Appendix

Community Needs Assessment Workshops

TAFEA Tourism Awareness and Marketing Workshop, April 2007

Stakeholders involved in the development of TAFEA tourism was brought together for the purpose of creating a better understanding of what the future can bring to TAFEA and from that make well formed plans of action to solve some of the issues, with intervention from head offices in Vila, that are impeding the forward movement of tourism development. The TTDO felt that at the end of the two days this objective was met. Presentations brought forward current issues and from discussions came new ones that were not recognized before. Participants realized that contribution to development has to be made from everyone involved in tourism, that there must be a team effort to follow through on solutions that were given as well as making the right plan for unsolved problems and that communication between tourism offices and communities is a necessity for future development. Participants included National and local Government, tourism agencies, TAFEA Tourism Council, and local owners and community.

The Agenda

<u>Day 1</u>	<u>Day 2</u>
Opening Ceremony	VTO Promotional Video for Vanuatu
Presentations from the following TAFEA Province Offices:	Presentation on Donor programs
TAFEA Tourism Council – Ron Hatland	Discussion on Developing Lenakel
TAFEA Province Secretary General – Tom Pita	Group Action Planning Sessions
TAFEA Public Works – Fred Gideon	
TAFEA Planner – Selwin David	<u>Day3</u>
TAFEA Tourism Development Office – Emily Niras and Erica Calderon	Presentations of Group Action Plans

<p>Aneityum Tourism Council Chairman – Barry Nagia</p> <p>Presentations from the following National Government Offices:</p> <p>NTDO – Robert Avio</p> <p>VTO – Linda Kalpoi</p> <p>Ni-Vanuatu Business - Mr. Joe Iauko</p> <p>TVL – Mr. Geoff Richards</p> <p>VIBA – Mr. Olivier Fidelio</p> <p>Air Vanuatu – David Dick</p> <p>Presentations from the following Private Sector Business:</p> <p>Lelepa Island Tours – Albert Solomon</p>	<p>VTO and NTDO Offices final remarks on Workshops</p> <p>Closing Ceremony</p>
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Presentations

Presentations by the TAFEA Speakers informed on the current situations of programs and projects in their individual departments that directly involves tourism. During this time, issues and certain needs that are not being met that are holding back progress were brought forward by all participants. Members of the audience and the representative officials gave input and asked questions which lead to reveal even more matters for concern that the group was not aware of. Some officials offered assistance to help resolve some problems.

Group Action Planning Overview

The group action planning sessions were lead by the appropriate Vila representatives to help the participants come up with their own solutions to the issues that were brought forward the previous day by TAFEA Province speakers and audience members. They were asked to keep in mind the following questions as guidelines in their thinking:

- What are the steps that need to be taken to solve this issue?
- Who would be the responsible person to fix the problem?
- How much time is needed to get results?
- If there is not enough funding, how can money are found to make it happen?
- Who or what group/organization would be responsible to make sure the plans happen?

The issues were put into categories and some (issues) overlapped into different sectors of the industry. Group leaders were chosen by Linda Kalpoi, Robert Avio and Ron Hatland to make sure that the right national government and community representatives sat in the group involved with the topics that he or she was in the best position to help resolve. Participants and members of the local community were separated into groups to discuss solutions on topics that interested them. There were eight groups whose issue categories were:

- Departure and other tourist taxes
- Infrastructure – roads, wharfs and airport
- Communication for Business
- Business Management
- Changing the way we think about Tourism

- Training for development
- Developing Yasur Volcano Attraction
- Developing Lenakel as a Tourist Center

Highlighted Issues

TVL Communications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone service is very poor and there is no mobile phone communication. • Internet service is very poor. • Costumer service is poor.
Changing our Thinking to Work Together:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land disputes, Taking responsibility, No unity for development. • When we talk about TAFEA, we think only of Tanna.
The Use of Tourism Tax Money:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tourist tax money is not used wisely to develop tourism . • Province does not enforce every business to pay taxes.
Yasur Volcano Attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Roads to the Volcano are no good. • There are too many disputes involving the Volcano Attraction. • The managers are not using profits to develop the attraction. • There is not enough money to develop the Volcano Attraction. • The tour guides are not professional. • Transport services to the Volcano are not the best.
Business Management:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no tourism standards to help meet customer expectations • Business operations are poor. • Businesses are not using revenue from tourism to develop business. • There are too many of the same type of tourism businesses. • There is not enough financial support to start a business.
Infrastructure – Roads, Warf and Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of Public works is not good which leads to poor planning and no maintenance program. • There are too many areas that need repair. • There is not enough manpower to carry out the work load. • There are not enough machines. • There is not enough money to complete the necessary repairs and maintenance.
Developing Lenakel as a Tourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no plans for developing Lenakel. • The province cannot control development because Lenakel is not on public

Center:	<p>land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no good Tourist services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ There are too many land disputes ▫ The people who work and stay in Lenakel do not understand the economic benefits of Lenakel. ▫ Lenakel is not attractive and not tourists friendly ▫ There is no map or signs of Lenakel and other sites for the tourist ▫ There is not enough tourist entertainment at the airport. ▫ The roads are dusty and unattractive ▫ There are no public toilet facilities /there is no water for public use ▫ Part of Income generated from businesses is not used for beautification • There is a poor relationship between the Nikolatan council of Chiefs and Province.
Development through Training:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There aren't enough technical and qualified people to implement the REDI Plans. • The links that join the government departments and the national government departments together are weak and thus make the work process for the Provincial REDI plans difficult. • There are not enough programs and funding to start the appropriate training needed.

*Solutions were documented but for this report only the issues.

Other weaknesses pointed out in solutions were: Unqualified provincial officers and councilors, lack of tourism awareness, poor planning and management in province, political interference, lack of statistics, lack of finances at provincial level, supporting policies and regulations are needed, local human resources can be used more.

Invited Representatives and Guests

President of TAFEA Province,
Mr. Remi Kali
Secretary General of TAFEA
Province, Mr. Tom Peter
Secretary of Council of Chiefs,
Nikoletan
1st PA, Ministry of Ni-Vanuatu
Business, Mr. Collin Natonga
2nd PA, Ministry of
Infrastructure and Public Works,
Mr. Jack Saba
2nd PA, Ministry of Trade &
Tourism, Mr. Peter Mawa
Director of Meteorology
Department, Mr. Jotham Napat
General Manager, Vanuatu
Tourism Office, Ms. Linda
Kalpoi
Acting Director, Vanuatu
Tourism Development Office,
Robert Avio
Director, Department of Ni-
Vanuatu Business, Mr. Joe
Iauko
Chairman Vanuatu Tourism
Board of Directors, Mr. Ben
Tari
Commissioner, Vanuatu
Maritime Authority, Mr. Less
Napuati
Department of Economic and
Social Development, Mr.
Anderson Tagaro
Chief Engineer, Telecom
Vanuatu Limited, Mr. Geoff
Richards
Commercial Manager, Airports
Vanuatu Limited, Mr. Allan
Carlot

Air Vanuatu, Mr. David Dick
President, Vanuatu Island
Bungalow Association, Mr.
Olivier Fidelio
Tour Operator's Representative,
Mr. Albert Solomon
VBTC, Mr. Joe Harry
Accreditation Officer, Vanuatu
Tourism Office, Mr. Willie
Toama
Private Sector Representative,
Mr. Saby Natonga

TAFEA Province Planner –
Selwin David
TAFEA Province General
Manger – Fred Gideon
TAFEA Province Area
Councilors Strengthening
Officer – Dick Mete
TAFEA Tourism Development
Office – Emily Niras and Erica
Calderon
TAFEA Tourism Council
Chairman – Ron Hatland
TAFEA Cultural Center –
Donald Serel
Aneityum Tourism Council
Chairman – Barry Nagia
Councilor for Aneityum
Councilor for Futuna
Councilor for Aniwa
Councilor for Erromongo
Nengua Entani Yasur Volcano
TVET – Sam Samuel
VATET – Eric Sanman
TAFEA Tourism Council
Members
Local Public

Absent Invited Representatives
Secretary of Council of Chiefs,
Nikoletan
TAFEA Province Area
Councilors Strengthening
Officer – Dick Mete
Councilor for Aniwa
Councilor for Erromongo
Negua Entani Yasur Volcano
TVET Representative – Sam
Samuel
VATET Board Chairman – Eric
Sanman

Aneityum Development Planning Workshop

Stakeholders on the island of Aneityum came together for a four day workshop in 2008 to discuss issues in their tourism development and provide possible solutions. Representatives from the council, tourism business owners, government offices located on the island, and local community members attended. The group was smaller than TAFEA workshop with an average daily attendance of twenty people. The workshop followed the same format of the TAFEA workshop, however categories were different. Everyday a topic was discussed for participants to offer issues and concerns. Participants then separated into groups to provide possible solutions to the problems. The group presented their findings for further comments until an agreement was reached on the information. Aneityum is the last island in TAFEA Provinces and the chain of islands in Vanuatu. It is the closest to Australia and New Zealand . It has received cruise ship tourists for more than ten years.

Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor advertising. • Brochure is distributed to the cruise ship passengers only. • There is not enough information on the website. • Only few places in Vila advertise tourism Mystery Island. • No plans to promote tourism. • No Aneityum Tourism Council to manage marketing and promotion. 	
Management and Training	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders present themselves professionally at work and in the community. • Leaders have creative thinking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small knowledge/skills of business management • Poor tourism leadership skills. • Little tourism industry knowledge. • Customer Service skills. • Uncertified and qualified Special services business owners. • Poor communication skills; language deficiency in French and English
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong family units make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of tourism knowledge lowers community

Involvement	<p>good workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use custom ways to solve issues. • Use custom language and respect. 	<p>interest to work towards development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little understanding of tourism benefits and importance to the economy. • Poor management lowers community involvement. • Land disputes • Too much politics involved. • Participation in projects is low, especially women and children. • Project management and tourism business leaders do not attend development and tourism meetings. • Division inside the communities makes hard to work as a team.
Agriculture/ Fisheries/ Forestry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Garden food available for bungalows. • Food is planted and harvested based on seasons. • There is a small amount of land for farming. • Wild Pigs and other animals spoil gardens. • Low interest and commitment by the people to have gardens 	
	<p>Current Fish Market Project is not working because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No building to sell fish, Association has no boat. - Poor management. Selling market is small. - Short Workshops for training don't help. 	
	<p>Future negative impacts on tourism natural sites such as the reefs and sand beach due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soft mud during rainy season. - Water runoff during rainy season. - Timber companies are not always following regulations 	
Wharf/Airport /Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no wharf on the main island for cargo ships to dock. • Difficult to export timber. • There is no storage/warehouse. • When there is no fuel, boats cannot go to Mystery Island to pick up plane passengers. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airport runway is short/no barriers safety hazard for tourists. • Two flights a week is not enough. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government slow in making work or work is not done or completed on roads. • Government is slow in extending new water system to Mystery Island. • Low water pressure on the main island because people are joining their own pipes to the main water lines. 	
Communication/ Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor communication connections at Anelcauhat/Poor service from TVL/No mobile • No phones at other two villages, Port Patrick and Umej 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few cargo ship trips. • Goods are regularly sent by plane making costs stay high. • No roads, no trucks. 	

Latun Community CNA, Tanna Magic Tours Project

Latun community is located in “middle bush” Tanna about 20 minutes drive from Tanna’s airport. It is a family community of 68 adults and children that does not live a traditional Tanna lifestyle as their ancestors, but a lifestyle that values and follows custom practices. The community has several businesses whose profits go into a community savings that is used to assist in meeting family and community needs.

In 2007, the community launched an interactive culture tour as another income generating activity. Today the tour does not have the largest profits but has become Tanna’s most popular cultural tour activity, increasing the amount of tourist visitors and community benefits. Two years of monetary and material donations from tourist started the building of a new kindergarten school and every family receives added income annually because of their participation in the tour. The community wants to expand the tour by building a handicraft center with office to improve the tourists experience and create new positions for the women and the youth. Later, they want to create a community home stay for tourist. Latun Community has progressed because they listened to helpful advice and comments; however, the tours low profits, their inexperience in tourism, lack of tourism knowledge and limited access to tourism resources to meet the challenges ahead and has created discouragement in the community.

Community Needs Assessment

The CNA was done to look at different ways capacity building can happen to create sustainable tourism activities. All community members were invited and the attendees, especially the chiefs,

felt that the representation of men, woman, youth and elders was good. It was a 3 ½ day workshop of group participation and discussion on identifying the issues/weaknesses and the strengths/assets of the community. Attendees worked in even number groups to give inputs on strengths and weaknesses in seven categories: Income Activities social, cultural, groups, infrastructure and the Tanna Magic Tour. Group leaders made presentations and collectively, the groups agreed on final points. Groups were asked to consider the following to guide them in their discussions:

What are the conditions like in the community? Are they preventing or contributing to progress?

What are the changes in the community?

How are problems solved in the community?

What are the needs in the community?

How does the community work together?

What is unique about the community?

Areas	Weakness	Strengths
Income Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managers are inexperienced. • Few skilled people. • Inadequate/no facilities for individual activities. • Inadequate equipment and materials for operations. • No business transportation/pay for transport • Droughts and poor access to water slow productivity • Unknowledgeable about developing products/business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversified Businesses that involve all members of community: Butchery, Mama's markets, Kava, Tourism, Youth String Band, Sandalwood, taxi transportation • Profits go into community savings. • Community members support businesses. • Motivated to work

Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers are not interesting. • Younger students are losing interest in studying • Unmotivated health worker • Unclean water/River pollution • Family income doesn't meet the needs of the community • Women do a lot of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More youth attended higher education. • Health awareness decreased sickness • Elder are taken care of • Families work together • Men try to help in the house • Youth are interested in church and helping in the community.
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western influences are beginning to creep in. • Custom is not integrated into the school curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custom is respected • Chiefs governance is respected • Income activities encourage custom preservation • Community lifestyle follows custom; ceremonies, weaving, animals, etc.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural springs for water but not way to supply community. • Two rivers are polluted; used for washing and bathing. • Droughts destroy crops and animals. • Some erosion close to the river. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment committee established receives training. • Prohibited "Tabu" areas for conservation • Fertile soil and large land. • Forest is untouched
Community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church is the only place for groups to meet. • Sometimes groups have own agenda and unable to work with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups work well with others when they do. • Groups work to help the community on other projects. • Groups look after the sick and elderly • Group types: Womens, Youth and church
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have only a primary school • No electricity • Poor communication; mobile reception • Poor access to water • Road into community is sometime no good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good location: on main tourist/public roads, • Clinic is in the area • Two rivers and spring wells • Close to the airport and commercial center
Tanna Magic Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one manager who is somewhat experienced in operating a business • Lacking management skills • No marketing skills • No office building • Frustration in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popular with tourist; increased visits • Developed on own • Involves the children, youth and women • Preserves custom

