

DM2009 Project Summary

Project Number: 1641 Booth Number: 19

Samoans Turn to Traditional Housing as Sanctuary from Climate Risks

COUNTRY: The Independent State of Samoa

ORGANIZATION: Afeafe o Vaetoefaga Pacific Academy of Cultural Restoration, Research, and Development

FUNDING REQUEST: \$199,750

OBJECTIVES: To recover indigenous cultural knowledge held by Samoan elders about housing and climate, and to apply this to the design and construction practices of Samoan indigenous housing in order to inform the development of safer, accessible, resilient, and sustainable housing. To put indigenous knowledge into practice through the construction of three model Samoan houses (Fale) in three coastal sites. To reinvigorate village-based teaching and practice of growing materials, crafting, and constructing indigenous Samoan housing. To engage three village communities in a public education program about climate risk and developing risk management plans for the hazards that they will face.

RATIONALE: In Samoa a solution to the problem of increasing climate risks, particularly cyclone damage, is to develop housing based on indigenous knowledge, design, and materials. The housing design that proved most resilient through three recent cyclones was indigenous housing; one notable example named "Pousea" was constructed 80 years ago. This project aims to reinvigorate village-based practices in the crafting and construction of Samoan indigenous housing to create buildings that are safer, accessible, resilient, and sustainable. Along with efforts to increase skills at the village level there will be a public education strategy to increase awareness of growing climate risks and hazards.

INNOVATION: Our indigenous knowledge is a critical resource of adaptation innovation that can be applied to village-based housing design and construction to prevent high levels of devastation caused by climatic disasters. Taking a village-based approach to the dual problems of climate risks and housing will lead to solutions that make sense within village-based systems.

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