

# Pacific CEED Legacy Projects Promising Practices & Progress Report Form

**Project Name/Title:**

*Tasi le Ola* (One Life): A 5-part Breast Cancer Prevention Radio Drama

**Project Date/Duration:**

January – July 2009

**Jurisdiction/Island/Village:**

American Samoa

**Audience Reached**

Primary Audience-Women age 40 and older  
Secondary Audience- family and friends of women age 40 and older

**Contact Name/Info:**

American Samoa Community Cancer Coalition  
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**Photos:**

Samoan women created "One Wish for my Life" flags and received promotional packs at a *Listen to Tasi le Ola* social marketing event held at the LBJ Tropical Medical Center.



Twelve local singing groups contributed *Tasi le Ola* theme songs that encouraged women to make their health their priority. The artists performed at an outdoor kick-off event the weekend before the show aired.



Formative research results were shared with Key Stakeholders who included cancer survivors, media professionals, health care providers and traditional Samoan healers. Stakeholders applied the evidence and their own experiences in script development activities.



**Participant Quote:**

During the week following the final airing of *Tasi le Ola* Project Assistant Vaioge Tuito'elau documented a telephone call from a female listener whose life seemed to parallel the main character in the radio drama, Tasi. The listener shared the following:

*"Listening to the "Tasi le Ola" radio program was very interesting. Not only that it speaks life, it also sounded natural to the human ear—that any woman can relate to. At first, I thought these people [characters] were telling my story.*

*I am in my middle adulthood stage, married and have kids. I have been a heavy smoker for many years and I never bothered to go for medical checkups especially, when they [Public Health] advertised free cancer screening. I didn't think that I had time to do all that I thought was important. As I listen to the first episode where Tasi's daughters advise their sick mother to go see a doctor, it reminded me of my husband. I used to cough a lot and he used to tell me to go see a doctor because he was worried about my health. Before, I was a very stubborn woman and I denied the fact that I was a sick woman, but deep inside I felt it was the truth.*

*One day, I decided to go because I didn't feel well and I had no choice but to go and get help. I had no doubt in my mind that I have cancer but I just needed to find out for myself. As I went in for my first visit I was afraid and worried at the same time that I might have cancer and I won't be here for my children. My mind battled with so many unanswered questions but I knew I needed to make the right choice and move on from there. After I had seen a doctor, I received my results. I was told that I wasn't sick. I felt relieved and was very thankful to find out that I wasn't sick. I was happy that I made the right choice. Right now, I know that I am a changed person. I quit smoking and I go and get screened every year and I tell people about my story.*

*I believe listening to "Tasi le Ola" will change peoples' lives because I honestly say that most women want to get help but are afraid or have no idea of how to get help. I really want to thank the people who did the "Tasi le Ola" radio program-you did a great job with the radio program. The messages were encouraging and I enjoyed listening to all the episodes.*

*But I was curious to find out about Tasi's results...I want to find out when will be another "Tasi le Ola" radio program coming up. Is there another one coming soon?"*

## History/Background:

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in American Samoa and breast cancer is the most prevalent site for Samoan women. More than half (53%) of women in American Samoa report having a family member diagnosed with cancer with 72% of these cases being breast cancer.

Women are aware of breast cancer but are acting independent of mainstream care. Despite 73% of women reporting awareness of free local breast cancer screening and 73% of women stating they have done a self-breast exam, fewer than 30% of eligible women—age 40 and older—utilized clinical breast exam and mammogram services in American Samoa 2003-2007.

The US National Cancer Institute recognizes traditional healing methods as complementary and alternative therapy for cancer patients; however believing that cancer can be cured by Samoan healers (*Fofo, Taulasea*) leads some women to forego available western medical prevention and treatment. As high as 57% of American Samoan women report having visited a traditional Samoan healer for health problems and 24% believe that traditional healers can cure cancer. Amongst female cancer survivors, 22% say they sought treatment from a traditional healer. Women who say they would seek treatment from a traditional healer if diagnosed with breast cancer are less likely to have a mammogram even when they were aware of the test.

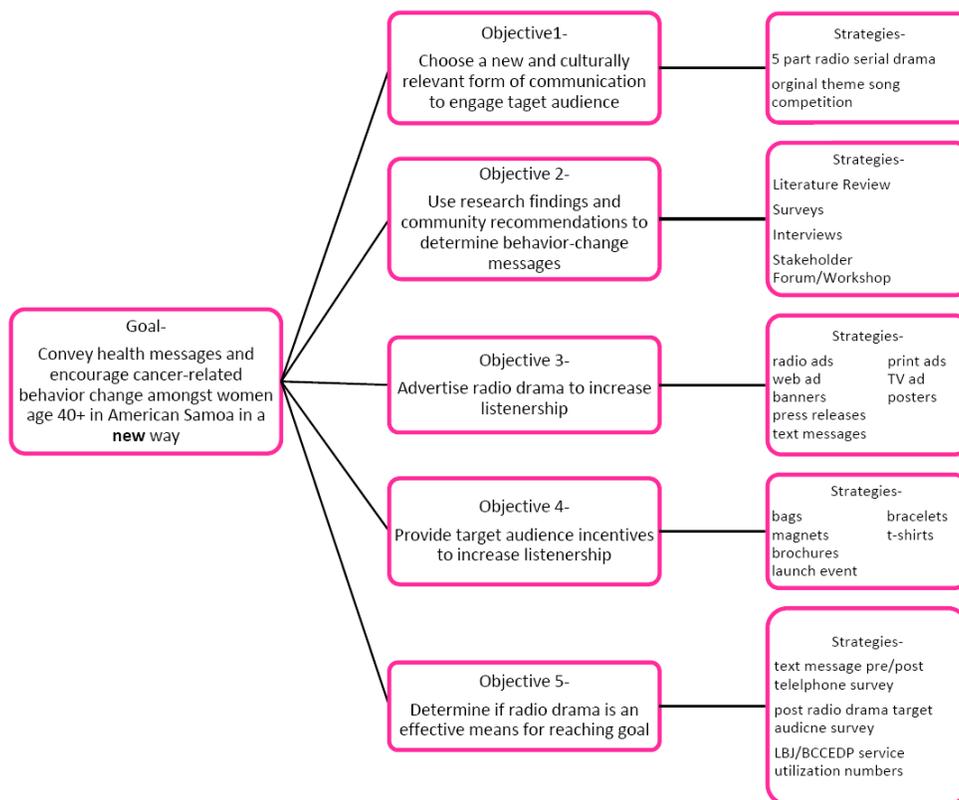
The American Samoa Community Cancer Coalition (ASCCC) previously produced a cervical cancer prevention documentary video that was well-received. Building on this success, as well as billboards, radio PSAs and outreach activities of partners, the ASCCC chose to address the low rate of breast cancer screening and women's utilization of alternative, traditional healing methods over mainstream care via mass media communication. This was the first time a serial drama format was used on local radio in American Samoa. *Tasi le Ola* was also the first multifaceted social marketing campaign based on local quantitative and qualitative data, and developed and implemented by a diverse group of American Samoa stakeholders.

## Goal and Objectives:

Relevant Comprehensive Cancer Control Goal: early detection

Objective 2.1: increase screening rates for breast cancer.

*Tasi le Ola* Project Goal, Objectives and Strategies:



## Planning & Development:

Project staff conducted formative research activities starting with a literature review focusing the following key terms: cancer (breast), women, complementary and alternative medicine/therapies, American Samoa, Samoans, traditional healers, and radio serial drama. A cancer-related knowledge-attitudes-behaviors survey was conducted with 179 Samoan women age 40 and older and 47 health care providers were surveyed about their attitudes and practices related to complementary and alternative medicine. Surveys were available in English and Samoan. And, 13 semi-formal interviews were conducted with health care providers, traditional Samoan healers, and female cancer survivors. Formative research data revealed typical patterns of behavior; women's perceived barriers to breast cancer screening and treatment; health care providers and Samoan healers' experiences in treating cancer patients; and key health behavior change messages. The formative research results were shared with Key Stakeholders at an open-invitation, community forum followed by a script development workshop.

Radio drama script development methods were adapted from Esta de Fossard's (1996) *How to Write a Radio Serial Drama for Social Development: A Script Writer's Guide*. Project staff facilitated workshop sessions that enabled Stakeholders to utilize formative research evidence and their own experiences in small-group activities that developed 1) the key health messages for a radio drama; 2) profiles of realistic characters; and 3) relevant plot scenarios in which to convey the health messages. Stakeholder input was summarized in a Creative Brief to guide the drafting of scripts for a 5-episode drama. Scripts were written collaboratively by a team of 4, first in English, then translated into Samoan and finally back-translated to English. Writers used the *Bilingual Guide to Understanding Cancer-related Terminologies in English and Samoan* by Okenaisa Fauolo and Tafito Aitaoto (2008) for standardized translations. The Stages of Change Model was employed to chart the development, or lack of development, of each radio drama character in light of relevant barriers encountered in the plot. The main characters modeled adoption of positive health behaviors related to the key health messages after overcoming barriers.

Scripts of episodes 1 and 2 were pretested with women in the target group in partnership with the American Samoan Territorial Administration on Aging (TAOA). Other project partners included Comprehensive Cancer Control (CCC), the American Samoa Community Cancer Network (ASCCN), Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (BCCEDP), and the Samoan National Nurses Association (SNNA) who contributed voice talent, song contest judging, script editing, kick-off event support, and advertising. Media partnerships were developed with 3 FM radio stations (V103, 92.1KSBS and 104 Showers of Blessings) to air and promote *Tasi le Ola* and assist in recording theme song contestants.

## Implementation:

| Phase        | Formative Research  | Production   | Airing & Promotion   | Impact Evaluation   |
|--------------|---|--|--|---|
| Dates        | January - March   | April - May  | May - June   | June - July   |
| Implementers | ASCCC Project Staff   | ASCCC Project Staff & Board Members  | ASCCC Project Staff & Board Members  | ASCCC Project Staff   |
| Key Partners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCC</li> <li>• ASCCN</li> <li>• BCCEDP</li> <li>• LBJ Topical Medical Center (LBJ)</li> <li>• BINGO halls</li> <li>• Cancer survivors</li> <li>• Samoan healers</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCC</li> <li>• TAOA</li> <li>• SNNA</li> <li>• Radio Stations</li> <li>• Volunteer actors</li> <li>• Singing groups</li> <li>• Feliti Barstow Public Library</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCC</li> <li>• TAOA</li> <li>• Department of Health</li> <li>• Radio stations</li> <li>• Singing groups</li> <li>• Blue Sky Communication</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• LBJ</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCC</li> <li>• ASCCN</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• BINGO halls</li> </ul>   |
| Activities   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature Review</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Interviews</li> <li>• Transcriptions</li> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Reporting</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder Forum &amp; Creative Brief Workshop</li> <li>• <i>Tasi le ola</i> Branding</li> <li>• Script writing, translation</li> <li>• Script pre-testing, editing</li> <li>• Taping, audio editing</li> <li>• Theme song contest, judging</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kick-off event</li> <li>• Promotional pack distribution</li> <li>• Advertising (TV, radio, news, web, banner, posters, word of mouth)</li> <li>• Radio station monitoring</li> <li>• Text message campaign</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Reporting</li> </ul>  |
| Output       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report: <i>Complementary and Alternative Medicine for Cancer in American Samoa-Pacific-CEED Legacy Project Formative Research for the Development of a Radio Serial Drama</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PowerPoint presentation</li> <li>• Workshop session guide</li> <li>• Creative Brief, logo</li> <li>• Scripts (Samoan, English)</li> <li>• Voice talent, song contest release forms</li> <li>• CD: 5, 10-minute episodes in Samoan; 5, 10-minute episodes in English; 12 theme songs, 2 ads</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press articles, photos</li> <li>• Print, web ads</li> <li>• Banner</li> <li>• 50+ new ASCCC memberships</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report: <i>'Tasi le Ola' Radio Drama Process Assessment &amp; Short-term Impact Evaluation</i></li> <li>• DVD: <i>The Making of 'Tasi le Ola'</i></li> </ul> |

## Evaluation:

A short-term impact evaluation survey was completed by 200 women the week after the final airing of *Tasi le Ola*. Key findings included:

- 62% of those surveyed reported listening to *Tasi le Ola*
- 27% of listeners heard at least 5 episodes of *Tasi le Ola* over 3 weeks of airing
- 61% listened to the program in Samoan *and* English
- 59% of listeners said they discussed the program with others
- 89% of listeners said that they learned something new about cancer from *Tasi le Ola*
- 94% said that they would like more radio programs like *Tasi le Ola*
- And, 77% of listeners compared to 64% of non-listeners intend to screen for breast cancer this year

A telephone survey of women who received cell phone text message reminders to listen to *Tasi le Ola* was also conducted. And, project staff set community participation goals and evaluated these aims at the end of the project using Lehman's (1999) *Model for Measuring Community Participation of Community-based Health Initiatives*.

## Lessons Learned:

Project Strengths:

- Broad Community Stakeholder base given many opportunities to contribute
- Dedicated, creative and team-oriented staff of writers/translators/producers/editors
- Cost-effective production: \$70 digital voice recorder and free audio editing software used
- Novelty: A radio drama had never been produced for cancer prevention in American Samoa so it caught people's attention
- Strong branding and promotion: *Tasi le Ola* logo present on all advertisements and on a variety of products distributed to the target audience (t-shirts, magnets, bracelets, bags) and ads were placed in all available media
- New project partnership developed with TAOA and partnerships strengthened with radio stations

Project Weaknesses:

- Airing schedule was short (3 weeks)
- Partnership with BCCEDP weak due to misunderstandings
- Basic impact evaluation only: A more thorough assessment should include focus groups with *Tasi le Ola* listeners, health care providers and traditional Samoan healers. Survey results of intended behaviors should be compared with women's' actual clinic attendance numbers requiring stronger relationships with BCCEDP and LBJ

Recommendations:

- Conduct thorough formative research on your health issue and how it affects your main target audience.
- Share results of your research with the community and use this opportunity to recruit volunteers for other project activities: actors, singers, song contest judges, pre-testing groups, etc..
- Think outside of the box: We conducted 150 surveys with women at a BINGO hall in less than 1 hour by offering a \$1 BINGO dabber incentive.
- Always pretest scripts before production to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness, especially when health concepts are translated to the native language from English.
- Adapt the methods found in *How to Write a Radio Serial Drama for Social Development: A Script Writer's Guide*.
- Use a simplified theory (Stages of Change) to develop characters and analyze pre- and post- intervention data.
- The theme song contest was easy to organize and very popular. We offered cash prizes and all songs were used in *Tasi le Ola* episodes. A health promotion song contest alone could be an effective project. The ASCCC owns the rights to all songs and can now use them for future cancer prevention campaigns.
- If you can afford it, air 1 episode several times over one week with the entire serial aired over 1+ month.
- Media production is time consuming: 1, 10-minute radio drama episode took about 3 hours to write collaboratively, another 2 hours to translate from English to Samoan, 1 hour to pretest, 1-2 hours to edit the script, 2-3 hours to audiotape in English and Samoan, and 5-6 hours to edit the audio of both language versions.
- *Tasi le ola* was a fun and rewarding project for staff and volunteers and there was an immediate positive response from the community. We recommend other islands try it because radio is very pervasive.

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