

# Yap: Neighboring Island Youth Conference

Photo essay by Pam Legdesog  
November 2018

*Our future depends on the decisions we make today; and the knowledge of our elders will help us make better ones. - conference participant*



*Participants at the Neighbor Islands Youth Conference, August 2018*

GEM Explorer sponsored the Neighboring Islands Youth Conference held on Yap August 13-15, 2018. Close to 50 youth leaders from nineteen neighboring islands were selected by the Council of Tamol (Neighboring Island Chief's Council) to participate in this event. The purpose of the conference was to provide information and foster increased participation and leadership of Neighboring Island youth in community activities that honored culture and protected local environments.

Youth engaged in presentations and interactive activities related to indigenous practices to preserve and protect local resources, traditional navigation methods, community based marine monitoring, food security and agroforestry, climate change, and disaster preparedness. Several chiefs and elders joined the youth at the conference to share their knowledge and to support the youth. The elder voice was extremely beneficial, both to share indigenous knowledge as well as serve as an encouragement for youth to become more engaged in local environmental efforts for the small islands in Yap.

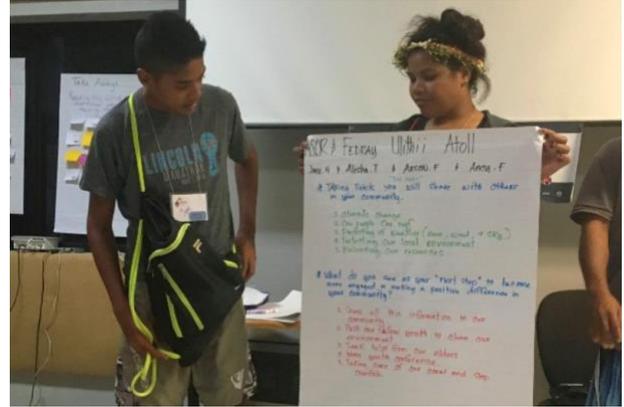
And at the end, our youth participants prepared Talking Point Take-Away Posters and action plans to share information with their respective island youth groups in efforts to increase engagement of youth in community outreach projects.

Thank you to our conference presenters: Yap Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, US Forestry, Yap Visitors Bureau, Waa'gey, One People, One Reef, and Melai Mai!





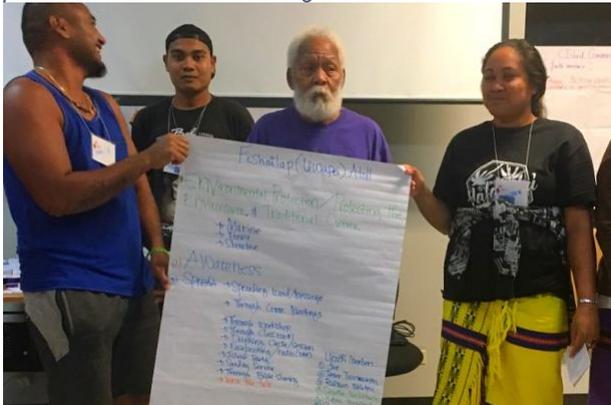
Opening remarks given by FSM Congressman and former FSM President Joseph Urusemal



Youth teams shared their action plans to share information with their youth groups; several chiefs joined the youth teams in the sharing and expressed interest in supporting the youth in their outreach efforts



Master navigator and Waa'gey director Larry Raigetel presented a session on reading the wind and stars.





**GEM** GEO-LITERACY  
EDUCATION IN  
MICRONESIA

# Neighboring Islands Youth Conference 13-15 August, 2018 Yap Small Business Center



## AUGUST 13

9:00 – 10:45 am	Refreshments
9:00 – 10:45 am	Opening Session – MC. Larry Raigetal ( <i>Waagey &amp; GEM Islet</i> ) Welcome Prayer – Fr. Nick Welcome/Conference Overview – Pam Legdesog ( <i>PREL, GEM Islet</i> ) Opening Remarks – Ramon Payal ( <i>Chairman COT</i> ) – Laz Ulith ( <i>Senator Yap State Legislature</i> ) GEM Introductory Activity for Participants – ( <i>Explorer Islet</i> )
<b>10:45 – 11:00am</b>	<b>Break</b>
11:00am – 12:15pm	Island Development & Protecting Local Environments ( <i>Tom Tamangmow, Director Yap Visitors Bureau</i> )
<b>12:15 – 1:00pm</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
1:00 – 2:00pm	<b>Presentation:</b> Reading the Wind & Waves in Traditional Navigation ( <i>Larry Raigetal, Waagey</i> )
2:00 – 3:00pm	<b>Presentation:</b> Local Ways of Knowing: Reading the Skies to Learn about Weather ( <i>Lorenzo Sartilug, Yap State Department of Education</i> )
<b>3:00 – 3:15pm</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
3:15 – 4:15pm	<b>Panel Discussion:</b> Traditional Conservation / Traditional Food Security Methods ( <i>Josephine Laguar, Glenda Waithog, Jon Jr. Rulmal, Larry Raigetal</i> )
4:15 – 4:30pm	<b>Debrief the Day</b> – Establish “Talking Points of the Day” ( <i>Groups &amp; ISLET members</i> )



## AUGUST 14

9:00 – 10:30 am

**Presentation:**  
One People, One Reef  
(Jon Jr. Rulmal)



**One People One Reef**  
Hofagie Laamle!

10:30 – 10:45am

**BREAK**

10:45am – 12:00 noon

**Presentation:**  
Malay Mai- Breadfruit Project  
(Amanda Uowolo, USDA Forest Service & Canita Rilometo, PREL GEM)



12:00 noon – 1:00pm

**LUNCH**

1:00 – 2:30pm

**Activity:**  
Agro forest Student Activity  
(Canita Rilometo, PREL GEM)

2:30 – 3:15pm

**Presentation:**  
Traditional Medicine Plants & GEM Explorer Products  
(Josephine Laguar, GEM ISLET & Pam Legdesog, PREL)



3:15 – 3:30pm

**BREAK**

3:30 – 4:15pm

**Presentation:**  
Engaging Communities in Disaster Preparedness & Planning  
(Raymond Pitmag Pong & Jonathan Mathau, Catholic Relief Services)



4:15 – 4:30pm

**Debrief the Day** – Establish “Talking Points of the Day”  
(Groups & ISLET members)

## AUGUST 15

9:00 – 9:30am

**Activity:**  
Agro forest Follow-Up  
(Canita Rilometo, PREL GEM)

9:30 – 10:00am

Climate Change & Adaptations for Small Island Atolls  
(Aden Suwel, Yap State Department of Education)

10:00 – 10:15am

**BREAK**

10:15 – 11:00am

Yap Forestry Division  
Set-Up for Outreach Projects  
(Pam Legdesog, PREL GEM)

11:00 – 11:30am

Project Group Work

12:00noon

Project Group Work

11:30am – 12:30pm

**LUNCH**

12:30 – 3:00pm

Groups work on Outreach Projects/Plans – ALL ISLET

3:00 – 4:00pm

Groups Share Projects – ISLET Facilitators

4:00 – 4:30pm

Debrief & Closing Remarks  
Youth Outreach Product Outcomes  
Talking Points Chart (to share with local communities)  
Brochures for YVB  
Designed phone cards to use as awareness activity

GEM GEO-LITERACY  
EDUCATION IN  
MICRONESIA

# Youth Programs in Yap

Photo essay by Mariah Itara Swigert  
January 2020

On June 26-28, the Youth Summit was held at Yap Catholic High School and the Small Business Center for both outer islands and Yap proper youths. The program included storytelling and chanting from elders, gender support, ongoing water and environmental conservation projects and avenues for youth involvement, highlights from various youth organization, such as the KORC (Kids of Ruu Community) and breadfruit documentation by Yap proper youths which entails interviewing elders and gathering information to create a breadfruit book, in partnership with Yap Department of Agriculture.

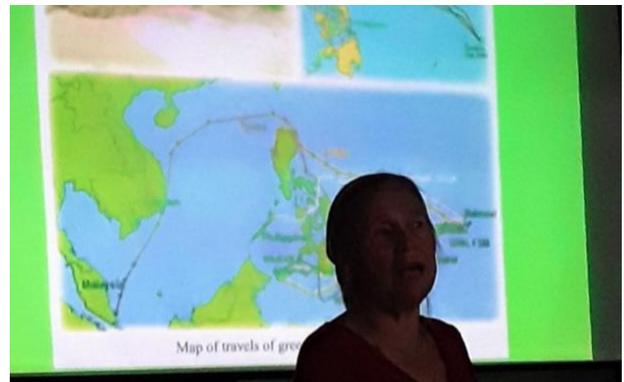
Breaking down the word “geoliteracy” was a key step in the program, but understanding exactly what that meant was not as evident until the presenters each gave their piece. Geoliteracy is about taking in information from nature, interpreting this information, and, what to do with it. It sounded like a fancy process, but many students, me included, realized that geoliteracy is exactly what people have been doing for centuries, especially in these islands. It is embedded into their culture, into many cultures, and it spans to everything from recognizing weather patterns to knowing when to harvest certain crops. Students appeared to be familiar with this concept, but had never heard it phrased in this way, and I thought that once that connection was made, the presentations started making more sense to many youth.



Days 1 & 2 at Yap Catholic High School: Talking about Water Security with Sean Gaarad of SPC's RENI project



*Days 1 & 2 at Yap Catholic High School: Traditional Food Security Methods & Technologies Storytelling with Raphaela Tinan*



*Day 3 at Small Business Center: Chanting, Storytelling & Local Ways of Knowing with Ruwniyol Martin & Constantine Yowbalaw and US Forestry Services & Youth involvement with Valentino Orhaitil & Dr. Margie Falanruw*

I thought many of the presentations were well articulated to the students, and for the few that were more complex, explanations were provided to ensure that the information was reaching the youths correctly. It was crucial that this information reach the youth in a way they could understand because much of it was specifically aimed towards living in Yap and its outer islands, and I believe that it was well-handled. I liked that several of the speakers took the opportunity to speak their native language, especially on Day 2 with the outer island youth, because I believe it reached the students in a way that can only be conveyed through your first language.

The boys from Woleai were among the presenters that chose to speak their own language, and they were a big hit with the other youths. From my understanding, they mostly explained the activities and tasks they did with One People One Reef, but I noticed a lot of positive reactions from the audience to their presentation. It could have been the unconventional way they presented, projecting pictures and giving their personal experiences or memories of what was going on in relation to the picture, or it could have been their closeness in age to the others. Either way, it was nice to see a presentation go over so well with the youth.





Sorting collected marine debris; students conducting transect surveying of Montipora.



Woleai boys helping with data entry from Montipora surveys.

