

## ✓ WHAT IT IS

A tool that identifies and analyses the litany of social causes, discourses and worldviews, and myths and metaphors that shape our current and future states. Causal layered analysis (CLA) has four levels:

1. **Litany** – the commonly accepted headlines of the way things should be
2. **Systemic causes** – the social, economic and political causes of our current and future states
3. **Worldview** – the lenses we use to understand and shape our world
4. **Myth and metaphor** – the deep unconscious story

## ✓ WHEN TO USE IT

Use it to better understand what forces are shaping our current state, and what needs to change at each of the four levels to achieve our desired future state.

## ✓ WHY USE IT

It analyses all the forces that are causing the current state to be the way it is, and all the changes that need to happen to achieve the desired future state. This tool also helps participants think in terms of transformative change.



Most participants new to strategic foresight methods find it easiest to work on the litany (what you can see) and work down to discussing the myth and metaphor (the deep unconscious story). Give people enough time to have deep discussions about worldviews and myths and metaphors, for the current and transformed states. Participants from Pacific cultures connected easily with metaphors or narrative futures which stimulated important reflections on the Pacific knowledge and perspectives.



## WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Sohail Inayatullah. 2017. Causal Layered Analysis.

👁 Available at <https://www.futuribles.com/en/causal-layered-analysis-2/>

The Pacific Community. 2022. A compendium of Pacific practice in strategic foresight, pages 32–33 and 53–54.

👁 Available at <https://purl.org/spc/digilib/doc/b47zt>



## HOW TO DO IT



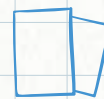
**Time**  
60 minutes



**No. of participants**  
15–30 participants



**Facilitation**  
One facilitator

**Material**







Butchers/drawing  
paper

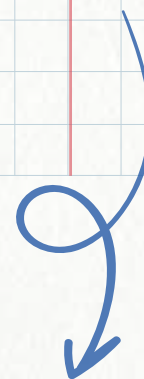


PowerPoint display if working in plenary



Coloured marker pens

Time & Activity	Step	Description
 10 minutes	1 	<b>Explain the causal layered analysis exercise.</b>
 40 minutes	2 	<b>Work through the present and transformed states in a U-shape.</b> <i>Commence with the present state litany, systemic causes, worldview and then metaphor. Move on to the transformed state beginning with the metaphor, worldview, systemic causes and then the litany.</i>
 10 minutes	3 	<b>Provide an overview of the findings from the causal layered analysis exercise.</b>



# CASE STUDY 13: CURRENT AND FUTURE STATES OF THE PACIFIC

57  
68

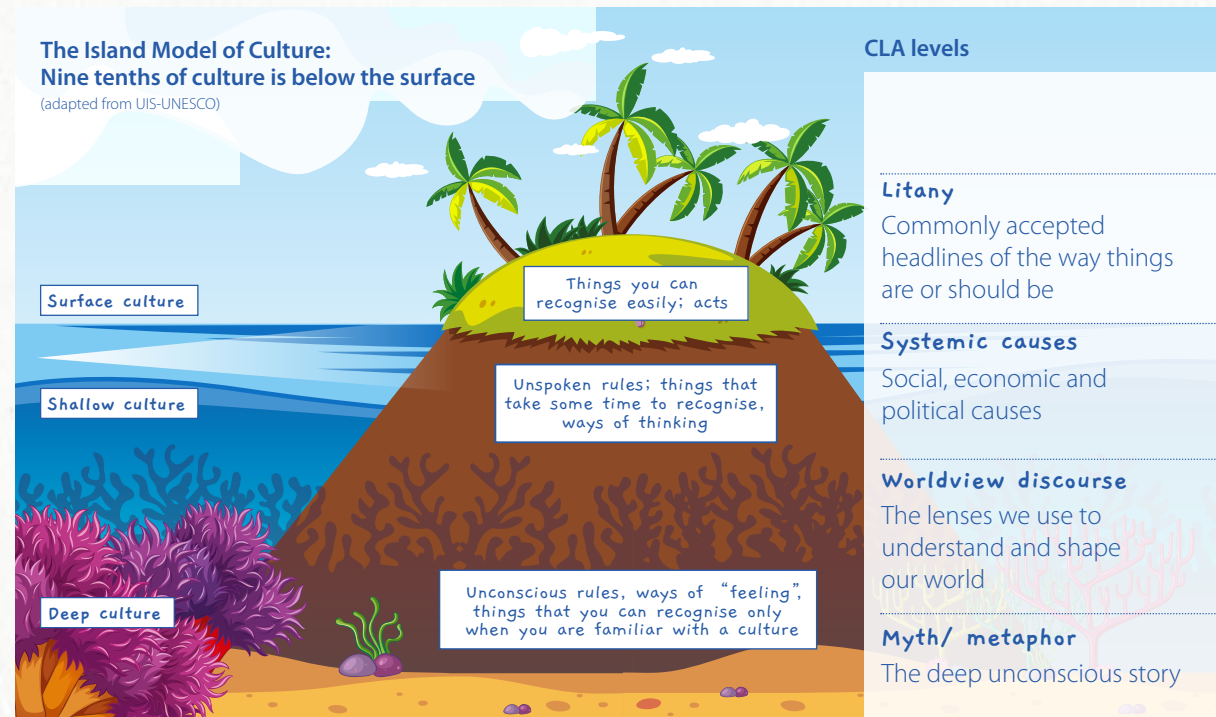
SPC Regional Director for Polynesia, Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara used CLA to reflect on the current state of the Pacific region and what a new future state could look like through the lens of a regional organisation.

## WHAT WE DID

The four levels in CLA are often represented by an iceberg metaphor. Leituala adapted the Island Model of Culture, which recognises nine-tenths of culture is below the surface. This model uses Samoan metaphors to describe the deep unconscious culture story (see Figure 11). This informed dialogue provides a shift to theory of action and recognition of change makers.

**Figure 11:**

*The relationship between the Island Model of Culture and the four levels of causal layered analysis*



Source: SPC Social Development Programme, 2019. Adapted from UIS-UNESCO





## WHAT HAPPENED

For each of the four levels of CLA, Leituala mapped the old, or current, state of the Pacific region against the new, desired future state (see Figure 12).



CLA has enabled us to tell our story through our own eyes, using our own words to frame and design our strategies for the future. The use of CLA has helped strengthen the cultural considerations for strategy development and, as a Samoan matai or chief, this was an opportunity to situate our history and cultural identity in the regional development discourse, by applying Samoan metaphorical references to help frame our story from our perspective.

- Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara, Regional Director - Polynesia, SPC

**Figure 12:**

*The current and future states of the Pacific analysed using causal layered analysis*

CLA	Old/ Current	New/ Future
<b>LITANY</b> Commonly accepted headlines of the way things are or should be	Pacific people need help, and they need someone to save them. Pacific people lack the capacity to lead their own development.	Pacific people have the knowledge, assets and tools to lead their own development. Pacific people have the voice and agency to determine their destiny as a collective.
<b>SYSTEMIC CAUSE</b> Social, economic and political causes	Colonisation. Politics of development aid in the Pacific. The place of the Pacific in international relations and the realities of "Small" Island Developing States.	Decolonisation of our policy and practice. Appreciation for our cultural wealth and cultural strengths as people.
<b>WORLDVIEW DISCOURSE</b> The lenses we use to understand and shape our world	"Small" Island Developing States all of the Pacific Island countries and territories, are vulnerable, isolated and operate from a deficit model.	Application of a Strengths Based Approach to Pacific development. Changing the narrative - economic, social, and political and elevating the Blue Pacific Narrative.
<b>MYTH/ METAPHOR</b> The deep unconscious story	<b>Tagi a le pu mate:</b> Like the crying of a dying triton or conch, this refers to a person whose life is in danger.	<b>Vivili fa'amanu o matagi:</b> A bird flying against the wind despite difficulties.  <b>Fofō alamea:</b> We are the solution to our challenges. We are part of the problem, and we are also part of the solution.  <b>Sa'ilimālō:</b> Leading a legacy in search of, or to achieve, great things for the good of the collective.

Source : Leituala Kuiniselani Toelupe Tago-Elisara

# CASE STUDY 14: CREATING VISIONS FOR SPC'S STRATEGIC AREAS

CLA was used to develop vision statements for each key focus area in SPC's strategic plan. We combined this exercise with a futures triangle (See Case study 7) and backcasting (See Case study 16).

## WHAT WE DID

Using Conceptboard, we ran two-hour workshops for the strategic plan's seven KFAs. Each workshop included 45 minutes for the CLA component. An average of 14 participants took part in each workshop, including country and territory representatives, and SPC senior leaders and technical staff.

In this exercise, we used the vision statements developed with the futures triangle (see Case study 7) to further define, and deepen our knowledge, of the transformed future state. We asked participants to conduct CLA on the present state, and this transformed future state (see Figure 13).

## WHAT HAPPENED

We documented participants' contributions in seven Conceptboards and used them as evidence to draft the Strategic Plan 2022–2031. We used the metaphors for the transformed future state to create visual images for each of the strategy's KFAs (see Case study 11).

The metaphors are anchored in Pacific perspectives, philosophies and worldviews (see Figure 13).



**Figure 13:**

Causal layered analysis for each key focus area in Strategic Plan 2022–2031

	<b>KFA1</b> Resilience and climate action	<b>KF2</b> Natural resources and biodiversity	<b>KFA3</b> Food systems	<b>KFA4</b> Equity, education and social development	<b>KFA5</b> Sustainable economies and livelihoods	<b>KFA6</b> Planetary health	<b>KFA7</b> Transforming institutional effectiveness
<b>Litany</b>	Coordinated resilient knowledge systems	Whole-of-Island-state-approach	Pacific recognition in global food systems	All people have access to well-being	High levels of early adoption of novel technologies	Health is measured by wellness and well-being	Working as one (integrated collaboration)
<b>Systemic</b>	Pacific voices and solutions	Interdisciplinary actions and decision-making	Systemic decision-making	Redesigned inclusive systems	Economic systems spreads prosperity and well-being	Risk-informed, responsive health systems	Inter-connected multidisciplinary approaches
<b>Worldview</b>	Equitable optimisation of resources	Balance of power/agency	Food sufficiency and health	Equity for everyone	Pacific leadership on learned best practices	Preventative health	Unified strengths for impact
<b>Methaphor</b>	Harmonic generosity of wisdom	The Earth and I are One. The Ocean is us.	Bountiful baskets and canoes	Woven basket of well-being	The tree we plant today will bear fruit tomorrow	<i>Healthy mana</i>	Many weavers, one fine mat

Source: SPC



As a researcher and development practitioner, I have a keen interest in examining and analysing deeper systemic and trans-disciplinary issues and perspectives and developing solutions in the same vein. I find that the lack of understanding of deep culture within the norms of society and understanding the ‘inner stories’ and blind spots of issues often lead to system/programme/intervention failures.

– Dr Amerita Ravuvu, Non-Communicable Diseases Adviser, Policy and Planning, SPC

## WHAT WE LEARNT

CLA helped us refine our strategic narrative. The process created the opportunity for our staff, and countries and territories through governance committee representatives, to unlock their imagination, explore new possibilities, have constructive dialogue, generate alternative solutions and take on the perspectives of others.