Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement
Strongim Yumi Tugeta

Program Design Document

August 2009

Final

Explanation of logo (provided by ICP Country Program Manager)

- The six threads represent the six NGO Partners.
- The coconut tree represents the six different NGO partners woven into one weave which represents working together in partnership - bridging the barriers, the diversities of our people, their cultures, languages, the geographically scattered islands of the country & bringing back stability into our communities. Though they may be seen differently in terms of their names, mandates and roles, all six SINPA NGO Partners serve the same purpose and that is to bring change - the dawning of a new day for the Solomon Islands.

SINPA – Strongim Yumi Tugeta

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Contents

Acronyms

ABM   Anglican Board of Mission
ADRA   Australian Development and Relief Agency
ADRA SI   Australian Development and Relief Agency Solomon Islands
ANGO   Australian NGO
APHEDA   Australian People for Health, Education & Development Abroad
AUSAID   Australian Agency for International Development
CSO   Civil Society Organisation
DSE   Development Services Exchange
FSC   Family Support Centre
ICP   Inclusive Communities Program (Church of Melanesia).
IWDA   International Women's Development Agency
LLEE   Live and Learn Environmental Education
M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO   Non Governmental Organisation
SCA   Save the Children Australia
SC SI   Save the Children Solomon Islands
SIARTC   Solomon Islands Association of Rural Training Centres
SIG   Solomon Island Government
SI Partners   Solomon Island NGOs partnered with Australian NGOs
SINCA   Solomon Islands Cooperation Agreement
SINPA   Solomon Islands NGO Cooperation Agreement
WPCW   Western Province Council of Women

Executive Summary

The SINPA program is a facility design. Six Australian NGOs (Oxfam, APHEDA, ADRA, IWDA, Save the Children and the Anglican Board of Mission/AngliCORD) are funded to work with their Solomon Island partners (Save the Children SI, Anglican Church of Melanesia, ADRA SI, Live and Learn, Western Province Council of Women and Family Support Centre) to carry out community-led development. The intention is to encourage flexible engagement in the area of livelihoods and health and explore what development approaches are effective in the Solomon Islands context.

SINPA is a program of NGO projects which are coherent in terms of approaches and learning. The six individual SINPA projects, which collectively make up SINPA, are similar, but contrasting. Their joint commonality is their intention to **flexibly** explore **Solomon Islands-led community development** processes in health and livelihoods; to do this using a `**strengths model**' and in a way that is cognisant of **power differentials** and address **gender inequity**. Each NGO aspires to ensure increasing **accountability to `primary stakeholders**' enabling Solomon Islands voices to be heard and increasingly for interventions to be **driven by Solomon Islands perspectives**.

SINPA's Goal is `to improve the health and livelihood opportunities of Solomon Islanders particularly women and young people'. The SINPA partnership objectives are for SINPA NGOs:

  a) **To become more effective at empowering Solomon Islanders (especially women and youth) to improve their quality of life.**

  b) **To explore different models/approaches to development which suit the Solomon Islands context.**

SINPA's expected outcomes are fourfold:
  ▪ Evidence of substantive changes in the lives of men, women and families as a result of SINPA NGOs work.

  ▪ Examples of approaches and/or models that are consistent with Solomon Islanders' `ways of doing things' and have engendered developmental changes appreciated by Solomon Islanders.

  ▪ Increased effectiveness of SINPA NGOs at supporting men and women in Solomon Islands to improve their quality of life.

  ▪ Shared learning and insights about how to support effective Solomon Islander-led community development[1].

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[1] Please note that these expected outcomes are provisional. They will be reviewed and potentially revised during a first SINPA Steering Committee workshop at the beginning of the Program.

Strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes are important to this design. An emphasis is placed on developing simple M&E frameworks which enable Solomon Islander voices to be heard, encourage accountability to primary stakeholders and for Solomon Islanders to increasingly determine the direction of on-going interventions. There are two stages to SINPA's monitoring and evaluation.

- Each NGO will design its own framework for the participatory monitoring of its work against its respective objectives.
- Each NGO will be part of a SINPA-wide process of monitoring and evaluating against SINPA's Goal and Objectives.

Each NGO will produce a **short annual report** for SINPA outlining achievements against its project objectives and a `stories of change' video/testimonies illustrating people's own stories of impact. Subsequently SINPA NGOs will come together annually to reflect on what they are achieving against SINPA's program objectives and expected outcomes. This Annual Reflection process will be designed to enable Solomon Islander voices to be heard and to create space for stakeholders to challenge NGOs in their thinking and hold them to account for their work.

The AusAID Activity manager will play a key role in the supporting the SINPA-wide annual reflection process and in analysing and articulating how SINPA's achievements are meeting AusAID accountability requirements. SINPA will contribute to three sectors of work outlined in the Australia-Solomon Islands Partnership for Development (PfD) – improved service delivery; improved economic livelihoods and improved economic infrastructure. The wider learning from SINPA's methods and approaches will be particularly useful to AusAID's Solomon Island country program and will, in time, provide rich examples of how best to support community health and livelihoods initiatives which are effective in the Solomon Island context.

A Steering Committee will manage SINPA. This committee comprises one managerial representative of each of the six local NGOs and AusAID. It will meet quarterly. The Steering Committee will be responsible for managing SINPA's work including coordination of geographical focus, oversight of the SINPA facilitator, allocation of a responsive fund ($500,000) and coordinating the SINPA Annual Reflection Process. In addition to the Steering Committee there will be other SINPA groups that will meet to exchange practice insights and knowledge. These include a Livelihoods Reference Group which is comprised of local partners and other external stakeholders including the Solomon Islands Government.

The program aspires to be sustainable in two main ways: Firstly the work in communities is likely to be sustainable because it will be driven by people themselves, Secondly, the learning from SINPA about how to initiate and support effective, culturally relevant, community development in the Solomon Island context will be a sustainable outcome from this program.

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"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about" Margaret Wheatley

1. Introduction

This design document outlines a new approach to AusAID's support for community development in the Solomon Islands. Drawing on lessons from previous experience, the Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement (SINPA) emphasises the importance of prioritising `community-driven development'[2]. Whereas there has been a tendency to interpret needs and `roll out' programs, SINPA seeks to enable people to have a strong voice in determining what is appropriate in their communities. It treats Primary Stakeholders (sometimes called `beneficiaries') as key actors in their own development process rather than `objects' of other people's development plans.

This SINPA design gives NGO Partners the opportunity to explore endogenous models of change in Solomon Island contexts. That is models, which are locally relevant, and which build on Solomon Islander's strengths, assets and knowledge. This design document outlines how six NGOs will explore community development processes in health and livelihoods which are effective in the context. It explains how each NGO incorporates a strong gender and power analysis into their work and builds on `community strengths'. Strong monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes are important to this design. M&E which emphasise reflection, learning and adaptation and which encourage increasing accountability to primary stakeholders[3]. The intention is that Solomon Islanders will determine the direction of interventions and be a strong voice in evaluating what is working and why.

2. Policy Context

The Australian Government has placed accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goals as a central policy platform[4]. To achieve this vision, it is committed to continuing to improve effectiveness. It explicitly recognises that development is complex and that to be effective, aid efforts have to be tailored to the circumstances in

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[2] Lessons from the former Solomon Island NGO Cooperation Agreement (SINCA) and the Community Sector Program (CSP) have informed this design.

[3] See AusAID. (2007). *Building Demand for Better Governance: New Directions for the Australian Aid Program*; Kelly L., Roche C. and David R. (2008) *Monitoring and evaluation approaches for civil society programs: Guidance for AusAID program officers*. AusAID.

[4] Australian Government, *Policy Statement on Australia's International Development Assistance*, Budget Statement 2009-10.

each country[5]. This is particularly important in `fragile environments' such as the Solomon Islands[6].

There is growing recognition amongst donors of the importance of poor people driving their own development process. A recent study by the World Bank concludes that the first principle of action should be to expand the scope for people in poverty to utilize their agency in both public and private spheres. Indeed poor people should become `important players in decisions that impact on their lives'[7].

The importance of a strong gender aware approach to development is also well recognised. Gender equality is at the heart of economic and social progress and is widely accepted as essential to sound development practice. Promoting gender equality requires a strategic and opportunistic approach – "blueprints don't work and can be counterproductive"[8].

Both the Port Moresby Declaration and the Australian Government's International Development Assistance Policy emphasise the valuable role of civil society to development efforts. The 2008 Annual Review of Development Effectiveness points to an enhanced recognition within the international community of the role of communities and civil society organisations in development – thus extending its understanding of 'country ownership' beyond central government.[9] The Government is particularly keen to deepen its partnerships with Australian NGOs.

The **Australia-Solomon Islands Partnership for Development** (PfD) contains four Priority Outcomes:
1. **Improved service delivery**, primarily in health; and education over time.
2. **Improved economic livelihoods**, including support for agricultural productivity and food security, vocational and enterprise skills development, access to microfinance, improved access to markets, better natural resource management and a more effective regulatory environment.
3. **Improved economic infrastructure** to improve access to markets and services; energy; and telecommunications.
4. **Addressing economic and fiscal challenges**, by improving the environment for long term fiscal certainty, more effective public expenditure and broad-based economic growth.

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[5] Australian Government, *Policy Statement on Australia's International Development Assistance, Budget Statement 2009-10*.
[6] Pavanello S. and Darcy J. (2008). *Improving the provision of basic services for the poor in fragile environments*. Prepared for AusAID Office of Development Effectiveness by the Overseas Development Institute (UK).
[7] Deepa Narayan, Lant Pritchett & Soumya Kapoor (2007) *Moving out of Poverty Study: Success from the Bottom up*, World Bank.
[8] AusAID. (2007). *Gender equality in Australia's Aid Program – Why and How*.
[9] Office of Development Effectiveness. (2009). *Civil Society Engagement EvaluationTerms of Reference*; *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*; *Accra Agenda for Action*

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The SINPA Concept consultation process concluded that civil society organisations (CSOs) can ably contribute to Priority Outcomes 1 and 2 of the PfD. The **AusAID Solomon Islands Community Sector Strategy (2007-11)** stresses that CSOs are well placed to adopt holistic approaches towards achieving these outcomes. The Strategy also provides guidance on best practice approaches to partnerships with civil society, emphasising flexibility, strengths based approaches; and long term engagement.

The **Solomon Islands Government Medium Term Development Strategy** (2008-10) explicitly identifies the contribution of civil society to its rural advancement agenda. In recognition of this, the Ministry of Home Affairs is currently driving the formalisation of government – civil society relationships through a Memorandum of Understanding with the NGO peak body.

Two recent AusAID guidance documents discuss the importance of more effective engagement with civil society partners. Both emphasise the importance of long-term engagement, careful contextualisation, flexible responses and regular adaptation over time[10].

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3. Situation Analysis

The Solomon Islands is a complex nation. It's spread over more than a thousand islands, with a diverse cultural mix and around eighty different dialects spoken. The population is approximately 552,000, about a third of whom are young people[11]. Absolute food shortage is rare, but poverty is evident. 10% of people have consumption levels below the food poverty line. 95% of these live in rural areas[12]. The need for rural development is clear, but achieving it is complex and requires careful negotiation of changing social, economic and political contexts.

Social structures and systems of authority are different across Solomon Islands' various cultures. Leadership and power is dominated by males at all levels[13]. The divisive effects of civil unrest on Guadalcanal (1998-2003) are still being felt in many communities. Farmers are vulnerable to volatile commodity and food prices, and the impending impact of the Global Recession. Rapid population growth has resulted in a large proportion of young men and women who are unemployed, disenfranchised and

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[10] *Building Demand for Better Governance: New Directions for the Australian Aid Program*. Position Statement and Program Guidance; Kelly L., Roche C. and David R. (2008) *Monitoring and evaluation approaches for civil society programs: Guidance for AusAID program officers*. AusAID.

[11] The Solomon Islands Housing and Population Census (1999) identified 32% of the population as between 14 and 29 (likely to be much higher in 2009). This is the Government's definition of young people. At the community level the definition is much more fluid, taking into account educational, marital and community status.

[12] Solomon Islands Housing and Population Census (1999); *A report on the estimation of basic needs poverty lines: the incidence and characteristics of poverty in the Solomon Islands*. Draft. National Statistics Office and UNDP Pacific Centre. August 2007.

[13] Pollard, A. (2009). *Report of the Two Days Workshop on Leadership, Power, Gender and Rural Livelihoods*. 30th April – 1st May

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disillusioned, liable to substance abuse, violence and political manipulation. Violence against women and girls and teenage pregnancy is a worrying backdrop as is rapid urbanisation.

Unequal power relationships between communities and 'outsiders' are common. Distribution of immediate material benefits to a small constituency is a common strategy used to exercise significant influence over rural communities - particularly in the context of parliamentary elections and logging. Similarly, in relation to aid, communities often see themselves as grateful recipients of charitable assistance (*'mi weit'*) rather than equal partners in a development process.[14] This stands in contrast to the self-reliance and resilience communities demonstrate in other aspects of village life. It also sits uneasily with community development principles.

Achieving sustainable development outcomes in the Solomon Islands context is not easy. Remote communities, difficult communications, underdeveloped civil society, absence of strong government and civil unrest make this a difficult context in which to work. Arguably, discordance between a `Western approach to development' and strong Solomon Islands `ways of doing things', may not have helped[15].

4. Rationale for this activity

NGOs within the Solomon Islands are an underdeveloped force with great potential. Many are fragile and still developing but have strong roots into the Solomon Islands culture; direct and detailed knowledge of the particular settings in which they work (including relevant environmental, political, and social issues); committed and passionate staff; and the potential to make a big difference[16].

Arguably AusAID's past efforts to support Solomon Islands NGO initiatives have been influenced by external perspectives and models of development without adequate space given to exploring holistic, endogenous models of change[17]. Indeed under the former Solomon Islands NGO Cooperation Agreement (SINCA), communities were frequently frustrated with receiving pre-designed, `one size fits all' programs, often

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[14] For a PNG perspective, see Berman, M. (2000). *Community management of development: how can we make it happen?*
http://www.pngbuai.com/300socialsciences/management/community_dev_mgmt.html. (Accessed 20 April 2009).

[15] A `western model' can be characterised as task-oriented, employing fixed deadlines, pre-determined indicators of success and tightly defined objectives.

[16] AusAID. (2007). *Analysis of the "Community Sector" in Solomon Islands.* NGOs only emerged in the Solomon Islands during the 1980s with the exception of the `relief and welfare' organisations that accompanied colonisation (Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides etc).

[17] SINCA was based on a logical framework approach. Though there was apparently room for flexibility, local partners did not feel they were able to adapt programs to changing circumstances. Solomon Island NGOs involved in SINCA referred to their felt need to `roll out programs and meet training targets'.

delivered through training workshops that were not always relevant or followed up. This constrained community ownership and commitment.

Key lessons from the former (SINCA) have informed this design[18]:

- **Flexible design processes are appropriate.** Programs should emphasise a `learning by doing approach' which is based on mutual learning and exchange; and leads to on-going program adaptation based on what is working at the community level.

- **Be realistic and feasible**. NGOs should design projects that are technically feasible within the constraints of the time/resources available. Project budgets should adequately resource travel and communication costs to accommodate for the difficult Solomon Islands context.

- **Capacity development is important**. Project designs should be cognisant of the capacity of local partners. Project budgets should ensure adequate provision of resources to strengthen the capacity of implementing teams. Further, approaches to capacity development of primary stakeholders should be sophisticated, monitored and extend beyond training workshops.

Other lessons from SINCA have also been influential. In particular: the recognition that `program- level' outcomes do not spontaneously manifest from a portfolio of discrete NGO projects; there should be clear reasons for NGO collaboration; and that AusAID should explicitly articulate the rationale for future cooperation agreements in the Solomon Islands.

This new partnership agreement therefore focuses on exploring models of community development which are effective in Solomon Islands contexts. It encourages NGOs to work in a holistic, practical and adaptive way to encourage primary stakeholders to address their own health and livelihoods issues. An emphasis is placed on using a Strengths Based Approach which encourages Solomon Islanders to lead on their own development processes in context specific ways[19]. Through a process of working together and collaboratively exchanging ideas and learning, SINPA aims to improve collective NGO effectiveness in achieving sustainable outcomes in health and livelihoods.

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[18] *Report on the SINCA Cluster Evaluation*, Paul Crawford and Jo Thomson (5th August 2008), AusAID.

[19] Please see: *Strengths Based Approaches: Advantages and Possible Uses: Discussion Paper for AusAID*, June 2009; and Christopher Dureau (2009) *Applying Strength Based Approach to Community Development and Civil Society Strengthening Activities*, Melbourne. This approach was introduced to the SINPA design process by ICP and Save the Children, and picked up with enthusiasm by other partners.

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5. Design Process

Six Australian NGOs (ANGOs) and their respective Solomon Island Partner organisations (SI Partners) were chosen to be part of SINPA[20]. During the design phase an emphasis was placed on engendering collaborative, supportive engagement between NGOs as they embarked on their individual design processes. Two workshops were held during the design phase:

The purpose of the **first design workshop** was to share initial concept documents and jointly begin crafting the SINPA Program. In particular this first workshop concentrated on:

- Building relationships of **mutual trust** and developing initial processes for cross program working.
- Investigating **participatory forms of M&E** which could form the basis for the overall understanding of SINPA's achievements.
- Ensuring strong **gender and power analysis** throughout the project designs
- Ensuring a strong analysis of the **theory of change** in the design process.
- Developing **on-going collaboration** during the initial design phase[21].

For the second design workshop ANGOs and their SI Partners focused on:

- how the six projects combine together as a collective program of work and together agreed SINPA **program objectives**
- an **appropriate monitoring and evaluation** framework for SINPA
- the **roles and responsibilities** for SINPA coordination
- an **NGO charter** amongst the SINPA NGOs
- SINPA **NGO's expectations of AusAID**.

During the design phase SI Partners met monthly to up-date each other on their individual design processes and exchange lessons learned[22]. In addition two meetings were held among SINPA ANGOs in Australia[23]; a workshop was held on `Leadership,

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[20] NGOs were selected based on capacity statements (60%) that demonstrated existing partnerships and experience in Solomon Islands; and concept papers (40%) that demonstrated feasibility, clear theory of change, sound monitoring/evaluation and capacity development approaches. Criteria were developed in consultation with NGOs.

[21] The first design workshop was held in Savo 11th-13th March 2009 one month into the design phase. See appendix 1 for workshop report.

[22] Monthly design up-date reports were produced and widely shared.

[23] The first attended by only ANGOs. The second facilitated by two of the design facilitators: Linda Kelly and Rosalind David.

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Power, Gender and Rural Livelihoods' in Honiara[24]; and a `Livelihoods reference group' was formed to share knowledge between SI NGOs and others working on livelihoods[25].

Community engagement throughout the design process emphasised spending more time in communities to build trusting relationships and begin to understand local priorities and power dynamics. Many NGO staff committed extended periods of time discussing the rationale for strengths based approaches to counter expectations of 'hand outs'. Generally, this approach is resonating well, with communities excited to see NGOs' committing to deeper and more genuine partnerships; and Provincial Governments welcoming a genuinely community driven approach.

Each NGO developed a design document in line with guidance developed by AusAID.[26]An NGO peer review process will reinforce collective SINPA ownership; and improve the clarity, feasibility and relevance of design documents. Each NGO's design document (having been critiqued by AusAID and the design facilitators) will be reviewed by one of the other SINPA partners and two external Solomon Islanders[27].

6. Partnership Principles and NGO Charter

The six individual project designs (which collectively make up the SINPA program) have been influenced by shared principles. These principles were agreed at the first design workshop and reaffirmed at the second workshop. The principles draw on the lessons from SINCA and aim to ensure the six SINPA projects are sustainable, relevant, effective and are based on an endogenous model of change in the Solomon Islands. Each of the six SINPA projects is therefore designed to:
- Be practical, realistic and feasible and firmly rooted in the Solomon Islands contexts.
- Ensure a strong gender and power analysis throughout the work.
- Ensure that each project works towards a "community vision" which is guided by the Solomon Islander groups with whom the project works.
- Ensure that SINPA builds on `strengths'.
- Integrate a reflexive `learning by doing' approach into all SINPA work.
- Ensure that M&E processes guarantee accountability (including feedback) to the people/communities with whom the project works.
- Ensure partnership/collaboration between NGOs and other stakeholders[28].

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[24] See Pollard, A (2009) `Report of the Two Day Workshop on Leadership, Power, Gender and Rural Livelihoods', 30th April – 1st May, Honiara, Solomon Islands.

[25] This group included: Save the Children, ADRA, APHEDA- SIARTC, Technical Vocational Education Unit (TVET), Ministry of Education (MEHRD), Community Sector Program (CSP) livelihood specialists.

[26] Each NGO design document has been provided to peer reviewers separately as background information. The AusAID guidance for NGO designs is at Appendix 8

[27] Respected Solomon Island peer reviewers were chosen jointly by the SINPA partners and AusAID based on their knowledge and experience in the relevant sectoral area, and strong awareness of rural contexts.

[28] See workshop reports for full explanation of these principles.

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SINPA NGOs want to ensure that collaboration continues throughout the program cycle. During the second design workshop SINPA NGOs therefore agreed an `NGO Charter' which would reduce potential competition and encourage on-going collaboration. This ten point charter is shown in Appendix 2.[29]

7. SINPA Goal and Objectives

The SINPA program is a facility design. The intention is to encourage progressive, flexible engagement in the area of livelihoods and health and explore what development processes are effective in Solomon Islands contexts. Contrary to most `development models' where people are the `objects of aid', the SINPA program is based on an endogenous model of change which encourages primary stakeholders (sometimes called `beneficiaries') to become **key actors** in determining **what change is relevant to their communities** and the **drivers of achieving change themselves**.

The emphasis of the work is therefore for external actors (SI Partners) to **support and empower individuals, community based organisation and communities** to take personal and social responsibility and respond appropriately to their own health and livelihood needs in their own culture. The program will investigate innovative, effective ways of working in Solomon Islands contexts and through SINPA share insights, models and approaches that are firmly rooted in the `Solomon Islands way'.

Therefore SINPA **is a program of NGO projects which are coherent in terms of approaches and learning.** The added value of working together, sharing development insights, sharing common principles to M&E and exploring what works in Solomon Islands contexts will bring value to the NGOs, their work and the wider development community in the Solomon Islands.

SINPA's Goal is `to improve the health and livelihood opportunities of Solomon Islanders particularly women and young people'.

The SINPA partnership objectives are for SINPA NGOs:
   a) To become more effective at empowering Solomon Islanders (especially women and youth) **to improve their quality of life**.

   b) To explore different models/approaches to development which suit the Solomon Islands context.
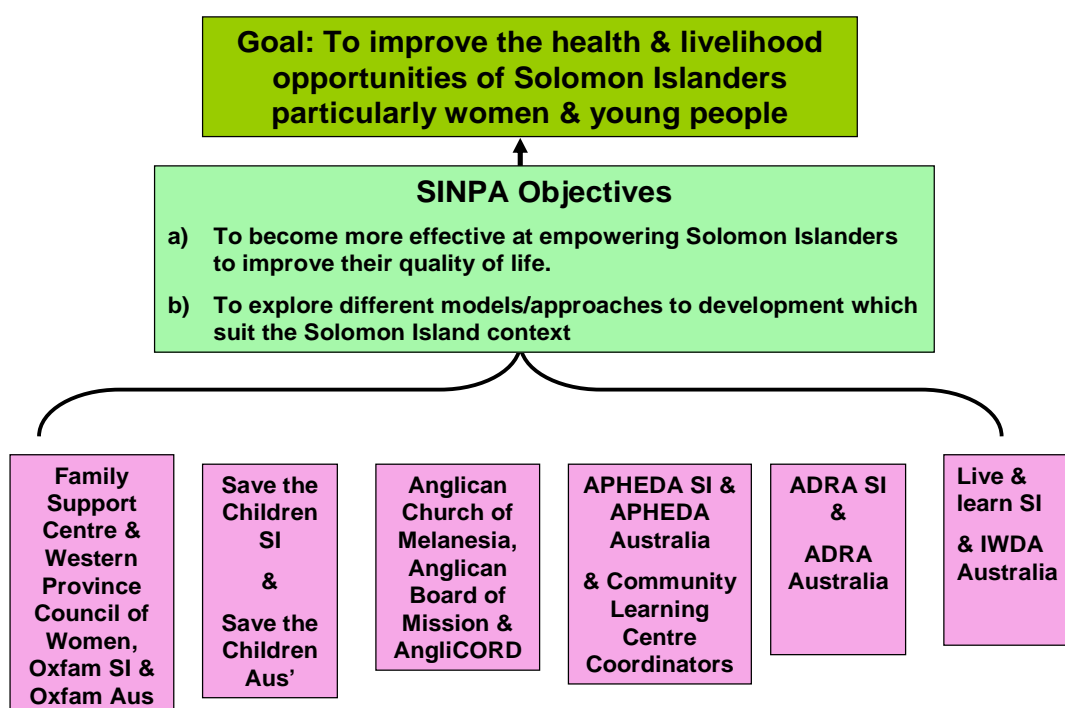
The expected outcomes from the SINPA partnership are fourfold:
   ▪ Evidence of substantive changes in the lives of men, women and families as a result of SINPA NGOs work.

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[29] The SINPA Steering Committee will discuss issues arising from this charter at quarterly SINPA Partner meetings in Honiara.

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- Examples of approaches and/or models that are consistent with Solomon Islanders' `ways of doing things' and have engendered developmental changes appreciated by Solomon Islanders.

- Increased effectiveness of SINPA NGOs at supporting men and women in Solomon Islands to improve their quality of life.

- Shared learning and insights about how to support effective Solomon Islander-led community development[30].

Goal: To improve the health & livelihood opportunities of Solomon Islanders particularly women & young people

SINPA Objectives

a) **To become more effective at empowering Solomon Islanders to improve their quality of life.**

b) **To explore different models/approaches to development which suit the Solomon Island context**

Family Support Centre & Western Province Council of Women, Oxfam SI & Oxfam Aus	Save the Children SI & Save the Children Aus'	Anglican Church of Melanesia, Anglican Board of Mission & AngliCORD	APHEDA SI & APHEDA Australia & Community Learning Centre Coordinators	ADRA SI & ADRA Australia	Live & learn SI & IWDA Australia

Six NGO projects work alongside each other. They are similar but contrasting.

The six individual SINPA projects (which collectively make up SINPA) are similar, but contrasting. Their joint commonality is their intention to **flexibly** explore **Solomon Islands-led community development** processes in health and livelihoods; to do this using a `**strengths model**' and in a way that is cognisant of **power differentials** and addresses **gender inequity**. Each NGO aspires to ensure increasing **accountability to `primary stakeholders**' enabling Solomon Islands voices to be heard and increasingly for interventions to be **driven by Solomon Islands perspectives**. Each of the SINPA NGOs will apply a reflexive approach to its work and through adaptive learning improve the quality of its on-going interventions. Central to each project design is a

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[30] Please note that these expected outcomes are provisional. They will be reviewed and potentially revised during a first SINPA Steering Committee workshop at the beginning of the Program.

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capacity development element whereby ANGOs are supporting their SI Partners to develop their skills to carry out strong community development work in the Solomon Islands context. A brief outline of each of the six projects is given below.

1. Save the Children – Youth Outreach Partnerships Project

Save the children's goal is: **to improve the health and livelihood opportunities of Solomon Islanders particularly women and young people**. It will achieve this goal through three interlinked components: sustainable livelihoods for young men and women; the promotion and facilitation of healthy lifestyles through non-formal education (life skills) and mentoring; and the enhancement of young people's participation in policy formation and implementation at all levels.

SCA will engage in intensive community processes: processes which are mindful of power dynamics and gender inequity. Its work will be determined by the community groups and will concentrate on empowering groups to seek their own solutions to problems. SC will provide external support for locally driven processes, linking community groups with external providers and government, supporting youth to have a voice at provincial/national levels, providing information and engaging young men and women in healthy activities such as sports and generating income activities (such as selling cooked food; setting up canteens; carpentry; sewing and brick making.) The action reflection model will underpin SCA's M&E. This project will engage key stakeholders in assessing the worth of the interventions and its work will respond flexibly to on-going learning.

2. ADRA Solomon Islands

ADRA's project also focuses on the issue of young people and livelihoods. It will work with both young men and women and encourage a community response to working with young people. ADRA's goal: "*To improve the livelihood opportunities, resiliency and community engagement of young people in a more empowered and sensitised community.*". Its objectives are threefold:
- CSOs will be empowered to increase livelihood opportunities for young people
- CSO's will be empowered to increase the resiliency of young people

Communities will be empowered to engage regularly and effectively in a positive environment with their youth

Likely livelihoods activities include building sustainable revolving finance schemes; vocational support (e.g. cocoa, carving, farming, floral decoration, cooking and small shops); and financial literacy development.

ADRA's project will build on community strengths and support initiatives driven by community groups. The work has a strong power and gender component which will be strengthened through its reflexive monitoring and evaluation work.

3. APHEDA – SKILLS (Sharing Knowledge, Improving Livelihoods, Learning Skills)

APHEDA's work is linked as it relates to livelihoods and health in Solomon Island communities. APHEDA has a long track record in supporting livelihoods training in the Solomon Islands. This project will work closely to support 45 indigenously run and managed Community Learning Centres (CLCs) across the country. The CLCs have been

formed by graduates from Rural Training Centres voluntarily sharing their skills within their villages.

APHEDA's work will be to build the capacity of CLC Coordinators to support community driven, gender aware, effective education and training. Its objectives are to:
- Build the capacity of project staff & CLC coordinators to work with communities to identify priorities & implement community-driven effective education and training.
- Develop the capacity of the CLC communities to build on strengths and facilitate a community driven responses to health and livelihoods needs.

Support will cover broad thematic areas in response to local priorities. For example, CLCs will promote skills development in literacy, numeracy, and basic small enterprise skills; and awareness and behaviour change in sexual and reproductive health; basic first aid; maternal and child health; sanitation/hygiene and infection control; and nutrition.

The APHEDA project will apply an active `learning by doing' approach to its work responding flexibly to what works well from the perspectives of the groups with whom they are working.

4. The Church of Melanesia – Inclusive Communities Program (ICP)
ICP's work builds on a strong network of churches across the Solomon Islands, a history of working on social issues and a deep understanding of Melanesian culture. Modernisation processes have increasingly separated traditional lifestyles and livelihoods from contemporary systems and expectations leaving people passive recipients and frustrated dependents. ICP will address **three** challenges in its program:
- To reignite an appreciation of traditional values and previous resilience by helping the community to recognise their own value and ability;
- To build a connection with the natural, physical and social context through a mapping and utilisation of locally available resources;
- To help the community develop visions of the future that are realistic and inclusive of gender, youth and disability and that they can achieve through their own efforts.

This work is driven by a strong Solomon Islander team who will work on gender and power issues through the lens of the *wantok* (family). ICP's goal is to "strengthen communities to become more responsible to help families to help themselves". With the support of ICP, communities will learn how to take joint responsibility for supporting their individual family groupings by promoting traditional values and actions to improve social inclusiveness and work together to achieve common visions by mobilising their own resources and working to gain greater support from outside organisations.

Through its work ICP will explicitly address issues of livelihoods opportunities, youth, gender violence and societal breakdown. ICP expects to provide assistance in improving productive use of resources through literacy, financial literacy, agricultural improvement skills, and improved sanitation practices. The project will use an action-

reflection model and adapt its work as it explores the most appropriate way to work social issues in the Solomon Island context.

5. Oxfam, the Family Support Centre & Western Province Council of Women

Oxfam and its partners' project focuses on reducing the level of violence and the social acceptance of violence against women. Its goal is that *"More families in Honiara and Western Province are enjoying lives free from violence".*

Oxfam, Western Province Council of Women (WPCW) and the Family Support Centre (FSC) will work together to develop Solomon Islands specific, locally-owned and appropriate models to address violence against women which can be replicated and scaled up in partnership with other organisations and stakeholders. The projects change model consists of a bottom-up approach which supports *reducing occurrence of violence and the acceptance of violence* through attitudinal and behaviour change at individual, household, and community levels. It also focuses on creating an `enabling environment' fostering high level commitment, appropriate and accessible legislation, access to services and counselling, and support for those working to change societal norms. An appropriate approach will be developed to support individuals, families and communities to develop their own strategies to address violence against women, with exploratory work being undertaken in Western Province.

The project will respond flexibly as it explores how to work best to work on violence against women in the Solomon Island context. An action-research element will help determine what strategies most effectively empower women, their families and communities to proactively address the underlying causes of violence.

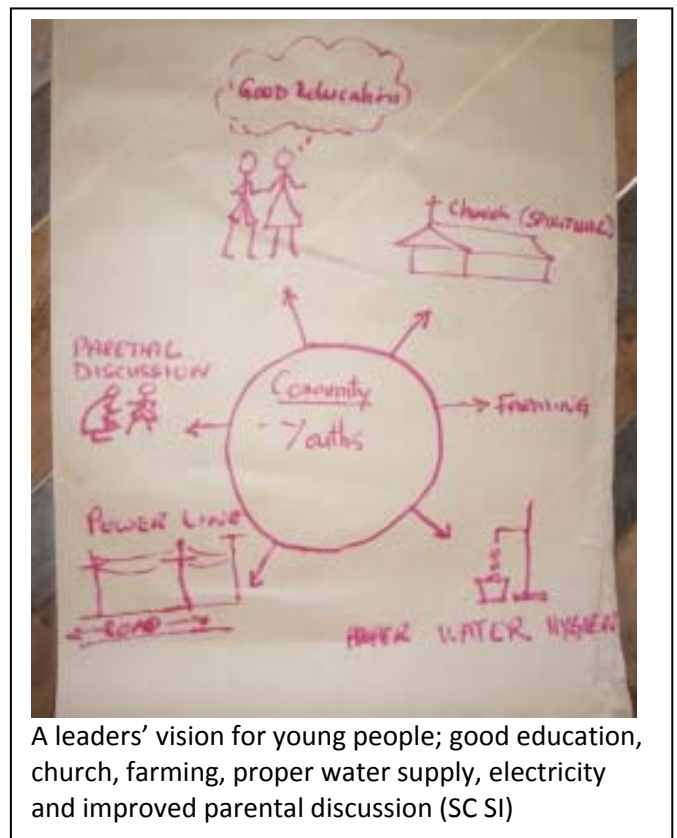## 6. Live and Learn Environmental Education & IWDA - Natural Resource Management

The Live and Learn project engages women and men in communities impacted by logging in four provinces in the Solomon Islands. The project will take an inclusive and integrated approach to natural resource management and livelihoods, grounded in shared understandings, aspirations and long-term visions of the women, men, young women, young men, communities and partners. Strengthening gender equity is central, particularly in regards to participation and decision-making, as a key way to enhance community wellbeing and social, economic and environmental resilience. The projects goal is to work towards more inclusive and environmentally sustainable communities. The project will seek change in four domains:
- Individual change in knowledge, attitudes and perceptions towards natural resource management practices, sustainable livelihoods and gender inclusive decision making processes.
- Change in capacity of groups and communities to organise and mobilise environmentally sound, more equitable and sustainable livelihoods.
- Change in community wellbeing and resilience through safeguarding natural resources, sustainable livelihoods and more inclusive participation and decision-making processes.

- Changes in regulatory and policy approaches, towards evidence-based policies and legal structures that safeguard natural resources, protect rights and promote gender equity.

Strategies to be adopted include establishment/maintenance of land and sea conservation sites; agriculture skills development; savings schemes and revolving funds; facilitation of improved access to markets; and sanitation behaviour change.

The M&E of this project is based an adaptive model. Regular review processes involving local groups will facilitate learning from successes/failures which will influence on-going work.

Young males write down their visions for the future (SC SI)

A leaders' vision for young people; good education, church, farming, proper water supply, electricity and improved parental discussion (SC SI)

8. Monitoring & evaluation of SINPA

SINPA M&E processes emphasise a reflective, adaptive model which encourages individual NGOs to explore what works well in Solomon Islands contexts and readapt annual plans to build on strengths. An emphasis is also placed on developing **simple** M&E frameworks which enable **Solomon Islands voices to be heard, encourage accountability to primary stakeholders and for Solomon Islanders to increasingly determine the direction of on-going interventions.**

There are two stages to the monitoring and evaluation of SINPA.

- Each NGO will design its own framework for monitoring its work against its respective objectives[31].
- Each NGO will be part of a simple SINPA-wide process of monitoring and evaluating against SINPA's Goal and Objectives.

Continuous Learning: Planning, Action, Reflection, Learning, Planning.
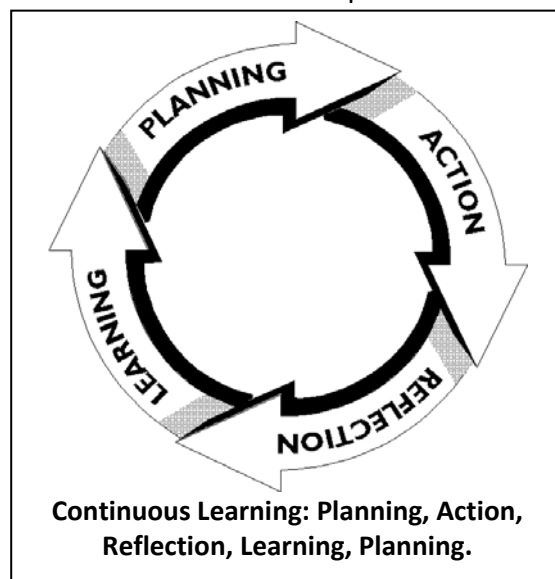
Reporting

Each NGO will produce two types of reporting annually for SINPA:

a. **Stories of Change:** In accordance with the strong oral tradition in the Solomon Islands, each NGO will make use of appropriate methods (participatory video, cameras, audio tapes or oral testimonies etc.) to illustrate people's <u>own stories</u> and perspectives of change (see appendix 3 for further discussion on this).

b. **A <u>short</u> 10 page report.** Secondly each NGO would produce a short annual report for AusAID covering:

  i. Project implementation progress (this would be a short section of approximately half a page).

  ii. **Collaboration** and the quality of the collaboration with other SINPA NGOs.

  iii. **Changes in the capacity** of the SINPA NGO and its ability to be effective.

  iv. What the project is achieving against 4 domains of change[32]:
  - **Awareness/knowledge/skills/behaviour change**: of men, women, boys, girls & youth bought about by SINPA?

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[31] See appendix 4 for shared principles to M&E.
[32] In other words, <u>how effective the NGO is in practice</u>.

- **Capacity change**: what changes are there in the capacity of CBOs/ organisations to take action in response to own health & livelihoods needs?
- **Condition change**. What changes are there in the lives of men/women, boys, girls, youth as a result of awareness, knowledge, skills, behaviour and capacity change? Is there evidence that the community has improved in health and there are benefits from improved livelihood activities?
- **Policy & practice change**: what changes are there in the policies & practices of state and non-state actors which have a bearing on the rights of Solomon Islanders to good health & sustainable livelihoods?

   It is fully recognized that these changes take time and that NGOs will not cover each of these domains each year. In the first years the projects will start slowly. An emphasis of the work being on exploring approaches/models which are appropriate and relevant to the Solomon Island context.

v. What the NGO has learnt about how to do good development work (models/approaches) in the SI.

vi. <u>What changes the NGO will make</u> the following year as a result of the learning.

SINPA-wide annual reflection process

SINPA's objectives are to become more effective at empowering Solomon Islanders to improve the quality of their lives and through SINPA share insights, models and approaches that are firmly rooted in the Solomon Islands way.

SINPA NGOs therefore agreed to come together annually to reflect, challenge and learn about how to improve their effectiveness. The annual reflection processes will be designed to enable Solomon Islander voices to be heard and to create space for Solomon Islander peers to challenge the NGOs in their thinking. `Double loop learning' (or learning that leads to fundamentally new ways of looking at the issue in question) will be encouraged[33].

The SINPA NGOs will bring to the annual reflection process their own analysis from their own M&E. The annual reflection will be carried out in two stages:

a) **4 day SINPA-partners discussion:** During the first three days, the SI NGOs and AusAID will review individual projects and provide supportive critique of others work. The emphasis of the forum will be on <u>learning together</u> about what works in the Solomon Islands context and analysis of the program. External research (coordinated by the SINPA Steering Committee) will feed into this discussion, providing an external on-
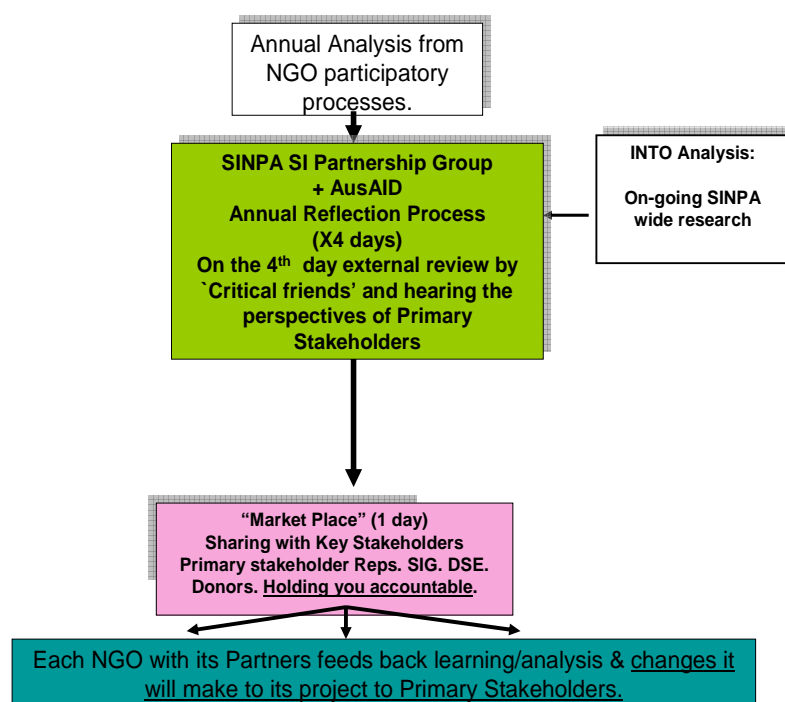
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[33] Rosalind Eyben, `Donors' Learning Difficulties: Results, Relationships and Responsibilities', IDS Bulletin Vol. 36 No 3 September 2005. IDS, Sussex, UK

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going analysis of `changes in the context' and understanding of what seems to be working in other initiatives in the Solomon Islands[34].

A key outcome from each Annual Reflection process will be **joint analysis and a joint report** (approximately 10 pages) of what the SINPA program is achieving against its objectives and expected outcomes. This report will be written up by the facilitator of the Annual Reflection process and agreed by the Steering Committee and AusAID (see Appendix 10 for SINPA's provisional performance assessment framework). This will be shared with other stakeholders as appropriate.

On the fourth day, the SINPA Steering Committee intend to invite primary stakeholders and external peer reviewers – (including strong gender experts) to provide critical review of their work and particularly of ways of working in the Solomon Islands. It is envisaged that a subset of the Solomon Islanders who were involved in the initial peer review of project designs may be willing to take part in this process.


```
            Annual Analysis from
            NGO participatory
            processes.

SINPA SI Partnership Group        INTO Analysis:
        + AusAID
  Annual Reflection Process      On-going SINPA
         (X4 days)               wide research
On the 4th day external review by
 `Critical friends' and hearing the
   perspectives of Primary
          Stakeholders

          "Market Place" (1 day)
     Sharing with Key Stakeholders
   Primary stakeholder Reps. SIG. DSE.
    Donors. Holding you accountable.

Each NGO with its Partners feeds back learning/analysis & changes it
       will make to its project to Primary Stakeholders.
```

b) Market Place:
A key emphasis of SINPA will be on learning how to engender appropriate development work in the Solomon Islands and sharing that learning with others. Therefore a second element to the annual reflection will be a `market place' sharing with stakeholders. This would be a one day event and will include:
- Representatives of the people with whom the projects are working in communities.
- Development Services Exchange, provincial government, Solomon Island Government
- Other NGOs/donors[35].

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[34] The guidance for this research will come from the in-country SINPA Steering Committee (see next section) with support from AusAID.
[35] NB. The involvement of Primary stakeholders in this event should be carefully managed to ensure `safe spaces' for people, particularly women, to speak.

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Following the SINPA level annual reflection process, each NGO would feedback its learning/analysis and project changes to its primary stakeholders in appropriate ways. Each NGO will also revise its objectives and/or strategies to reflect learning.

Mid term review & End of Program Evaluation

The mid term review and the end of program evaluation should build on the participatory processes carried out by each of the individual NGOs and the SINPA wide annual reflections. Both MTR and ICR should be conducted in ways which are guided by SINPA partners' principles of implementation. The approach should therefore:
o Be exploratory and innovative
o Build on strengths
o Be participatory
o Ensure accountability to primary stakeholders
o Have a strong gender and power analysis.
o Minimise additional work
o Draw on Solomon Island knowledge and expertise.

It is suggested that external consultants participate in selected annual reflection processes (carried out by individual NGOs) and in the SINPA wide reflection as well as provide critical input into discussion on appropriate ways of working[36]. During the MTR and the ICR an emphasis should be placed on reviewing overall achievements against SINPA's objectives and expected outcomes, synthesizing achievements against the SI-Australia Partnership for Development and drawing out `learning models' and/or approaches to development which are effective in the Solomon Islands context (see below).

After the MTR and ICR (or during the 3rd and 5th years of the program) it is envisaged that the `market place' forum will ensure a wider sharing of the learning from SINPA's approach. AusAID staff from Canberra and the Solomon Island Government would be key stakeholders in the final `market place' forum.

AusAID Annual Quality Reporting System

The AusAID Activity manager will play a **key role** in the supporting the SINPA-wide annual reflection process and in analysing and articulating how SINPA is tracking against AusAID's quality criteria, and contributing to AusAID's country level objectives. A strong body of evidence will be available to the Activity Manager to complete annual QAI reporting (see appendix 11).

▪ **Annual Program Performance Report (APPR)**
Each year in the APPR, the Activity Manager will need to articulate SINPA's contribution to the Australian Aid Program in Solomon Islands. SINPA – *Strongim Yumi*
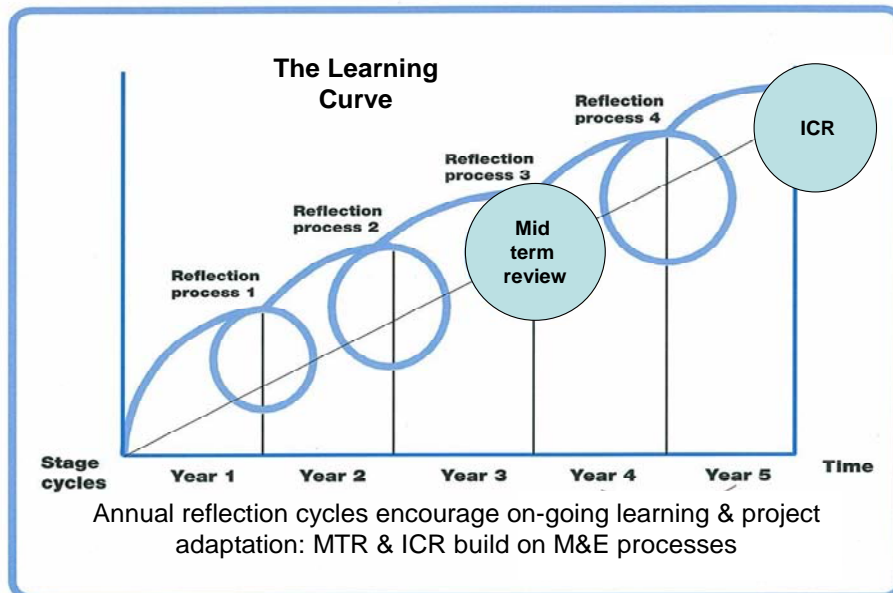
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[36] In line with the ethos of this program, **Solomon Island Consultants should be central to both the MTR and the ICR**. They should be involved in reflection processes in provinces where they speak the local dialect.

Tugeta will contribute to three Priority Outcomes of the Australia-Solomon Islands Partnership for Development (PfD) – improved economic livelihoods; improved service delivery; and potentially improved economic infrastructure (e.g. feeder roads). SINPA's achievements and learning against the PfD will be monitored annually during the Annual Reflection Process (see Appendix 10: Provisional Performance Assessment Framework) and will be externally analysed during the MTR and ICR in the third and fifth year of the program. In particular the MTR and ICR are expected to provide evidence and learning of how SI NGOs have improved service delivery, economic livelihoods and possibly economic infrastructure in the Solomon Islands in ways which are sustainable and led by Solomon Islanders.

The wider learning from SINPA's methods and approaches will be useful to both the Australian Aid Program in Solomon Islands and other development partners. It will, in time, provide rich examples of how best to support community health and livelihoods initiatives which are effective in Solomon Islands contexts.

Annual SINPA reports and `Stories of Change' videos produced by the SI NGOs will provide rich information on results articulated by Solomon Islanders about what changes the AusAID funded program is making to their lives.

The Learning Curve

Reflection process 1

Reflection process 2

Reflection process 3

Reflection process 4

Mid term review

ICR

Stage cycles

Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5

Time

Annual reflection cycles encourage on-going learning & project adaptation: MTR & ICR build on M&E processes

9. Management Arrangements

One of the important lessons from the former SINCA Program is the importance of inter-agency collaboration in the Solomon Islands. SINPA's management arrangements aim to:
° Encourage the development of open, honest and trusting relationships
° Allow local partners to shape the extent and nature of coordination and collaboration
° Be cost effective
° Genuinely share power in line with a partnership approach
° Encourage mutual accountability for agreed principles and practices (See NGO Charter, Appendix 2).

In order to maximise the opportunities for cross SINPA learning and engagement a **Steering Committee** will be formed in the Solomon Islands to manage SINPA. The committee will comprise one managerial representative of the six local NGOs and AusAID. It will meet on a quarterly basis, and will be chaired by the agency that hosts the SINPA Facilitator (see below)[37]. The Steering Committee will be responsible for managing SINPA's work including coordination of geographical focus, oversight of the SINPA Facilitator, allocation of the responsive fund ($500,000) and coordinating the SINPA annual reflection process (including high quality facilitation)[38]. In addition, it will ensure adequate consideration and resourcing for:

- High quality monitoring and evaluation by each partner.
- Sophisticated processes for making sense of the information generated by each NGO's M&E systems, to distil and share key lessons learned.
- Managing SINPA's risks[39].
- Engagement (through DSE) in SIG-civil society relationship building.
- Extension of opportunities for exchange and learning beyond SINPA partners to other community sector organisations, where feasible.

The Steering Committee will employ a **Facilitator** to coordinate cross SINPA exchange and learning[40]. The Facilitator will be accountable to the Steering Committee. This position will make use of the operational systems of one of the Steering Committee

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[37] It may invite external stakeholders, particularly the Development Services Exchange and Solomon Islands Government to join meetings.
[38] See appendix 5 for the Steering Committee areas of responsibility. However, please note that an initial workshop is required at the start of the program for the Steering Committee to together determine: The TORs for the facilitator; The SINPA learning agenda; Cross SINPA research; and cross-SINPA support needs including support for gender, monitoring and evaluation and facilitation of the Annual Reflection processes.
[39] See page 26 of this document for risks and risk management strategies.
[40] NB. The Steering Committee have yet to meet to decide on the structure of this post and whether it would merit a full time position.

members, and may be co-located within that agency. Day to day support to the Facilitator will be provided by the host agency[41]. The Facilitator will be responsible for:

o *Arranging logistics* for all cross-SINPA events e.g. steering committee meetings, livelihoods reference group meetings, annual reflection workshops, independent progress report etc.

o *Facilitating information exchange and resource sharing* amongst SINPA partners and with external stakeholders e.g. provincial government

o *Facilitating joint capacity development opportunities* e.g. exchanges/secondments between NGOs; sharing of training opportunities; mentoring/buddying arrangements etc. Where feasible, the Facilitator will also assist with making these opportunities available to external stakeholders e.g. other local CSOs.

o *Financial and contract management* e.g. venue hire, consultant engagement etc.

Throughout SINPA's lifespan **AusAID will retain responsibility for**:

o Approval of each partner's (and Facilitator's) annual work plan and annual budget

o Contractual and financial relationships with each partner

o Approval of terms of reference and final outputs of the SINPA independent progress report and independent completion report.

o Participation in NGO and SINPA reflection processes.

o Ongoing activity monitoring.

AusAID's agreed role

During the design workshops, SINPA partners proposed the following roles for AusAID in supporting the SINPA program to meet its objectives.

AusAID's role as a critical but supportive partner

▪ The AusAID Activity Manager (2nd Secretary) is proactive in visiting SINPA NGO partners work at village level and after doing so provides formal feedback to the NGO.

▪ AusAID supports the SINPA coordination and helps guide SINPA-wide research.

▪ AusAID participates in the Partners quarterly meetings.

▪ AusAID will be sensitive to the Solomon Islands way of doing things and provide consistent support to SINPA over its lifetime, helping to ensure that the program is given the space to creatively explore and share its analysis of what works in the Solomon Island context.

▪ AusAID plays a proactive role in linking other programs with SINPA NGOs work and vice versa.

▪ AusAID provides consistent support to a strong gender analysis across SINPA.

AusAID's role in supporting the Annual Reflection Processes

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[41] This arrangement will be reviewed at the end of year one, after which the host agency role may pass to another local partner or DSE, as agreed by the Steering Committee.

- AusAID staff (Activity Manger level) would support the `sense making' process (the analysis) among some NGOs annually and participate in some at least two project annual reflection processes (in villages/provinces) as `observers'.
- The Head of AusAID Program is involved in (selected) reflection Processes in villages (in a sensitive, appropriate manner not as a `big man').
- AusAID will play an active role in sharing the learning from SINPA across AusAID program (within the Solomon Islands and externally), with SIG, DSE, donors, NGOs and with others.
- AusAID will give guidance and support to the high quality facilitation of the SINPA-wide Annul reflection meeting.

Reference Groups

In addition to the Steering committee there will be other SINPA groups that meet to exchange practice insights and knowledge.

° **Once a year, the Steering Committee will organise a one day `Practice Exchange' workshop.** This workshop will bring together key staff from the six local NGOs (and from their partners as appropriate) and AusAID. Different individuals may attend each event, depending on its particular theme. There will be an emphasis on involving implementing staff, rather than just managers[42].

° **The wider Joint Partnership Group** made up of 1-2 representatives of each SI partner, ANGO, and AusAID will take part (as appropriate) in annual reflection workshops.

An **Australian NGO Network** made up of each of the six ANGOs, will continue to informally coordinate as needed. This arrangement worked well during the design phase. It will help ensure strategic cross-SINPA decisions are driven by local partners based on their needs.

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[42] Please note, that the `added value' of this forum will be determined by the Steering Committee. If this `Practice Exchange' workshop is not adding value to the quality of NGO's work then it will be discontinued.

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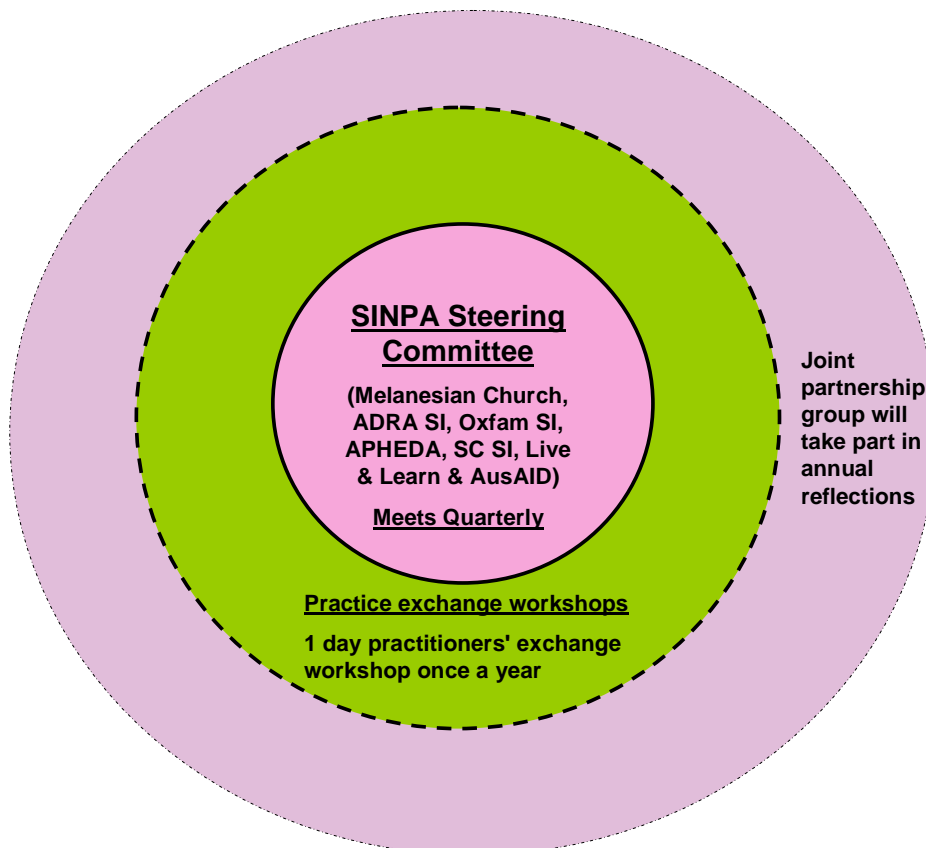
SINPA Steering Committee Coordinate SINPA activities

10. Funding and Timing

Funding for this initiative is expected to total $20 million from 1 August 2009 to 30 June 2014, based on the following arrangement:

- AusAID will make funding commitments to **each NGO** at the start of each financial year through an annual funding order, on the basis of an annual activity plan and budget that evidences responsiveness to the annual reflection process and alignment with SINPA's agreed principles.
- AusAID will annually provide funding for **cross-SINPA coordination** to the NGO hosting the SINPA Facilitator, following the submission of a SINPA coordination activity plan and budget. An indicative Year 1 activities and budget will be developed by the Steering Committee when it first meets and finalised by the Facilitator when he/she is recruited.
- An additional **responsive fund** of $500,000 will be available over the course of the five years to meet emerging needs, develop innovative initiatives, or conduct research. The Steering Committee will approve allocation of this fund, and collaborative initiatives will be encouraged.

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The annual cycle is influenced by the timing of the AusAID Quality at Implementation reporting process. Current expectations are that QAIs will be developed in January/February. Therefore, it is proposed that the SINPA annual cycle run from February to January, including the following key events:

- **October**: NGOs' Annual Reflection Workshops and submission of Annual Reports to AusAID.
- **November**: Joint Annual Reflection Workshop and drafting of Joint Annual Report
- **December**: Submission of Annual Activity Plans and Budgets
- **January**: Finalisation of Funding Orders; and drafting QAI
- **February**: Acquittal of previous financial year expenditure; and provision of annual *tranche* (covering period February to January)

However, given implementation commences in August 2009, it is proposed that the first year is as follows:

- August 2009: Payment of *tranche* (covering August 2009 to March 2010)
- April 2010: NGOs' carry out their own Annual Reflection processes and submit Annual Reports to AusAID.
- May 2010: This is the opportunity for a joint (mini) Annual reflection process where NGOs concentrate on ensuring their underlying M&E systems are capturing learning, enabling people's voices to be heard and enhancing `downward' accountability[43] .
- June 2010: Submission of Annual Activity Plans and Budgets; and finalisation of Funding Orders
- July 2010: Acquittal of previous FY expenditure; and provision of annual *tranche* (covering period July 2010 to January 2011)

11. Links with other programs

Drawing on the lessons from the SINCA, particular attention has been given through the design process to consideration and resourcing of internal and external coordination (beyond the coordination efforts of each NGO project).

In relation to economic livelihoods, SINPA NGOs initiated an **NGO Livelihoods Reference Group** during the design phase, with representation from Development Services Exchange (DSE) (NGO umbrella body), a range of local CSOs and private sector agencies, and relevant donor programs.[44] This Group will be an important mechanism for technical level coordination, sharing and dissemination of experiences and

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[43] Given that implementation has only been going on for 6 months, there would be no external sharing of `success stories/learning' at this first annual reflection. Instead emphasis would be on ensuring that all processes/systems are appropriately `light' and enabling NGOs to learn and adapt.
[44] EU Rural Advancement Micro-Project Program (RAMP); World Bank/EU/AusAID Rural Development Program (RDP) and Community Sector Program Agricultural Livelihoods Unit

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practices. It will be represented at the broader Rural Development Sector Working Group[45] to ensure implementation lessons are fed into higher level policy dialogue. [46]

In relation to <u>health</u>, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services recently committed to the development of a **Multi-Sectoral Working Committee** to develop a National Partnership Policy and Plan for working with faith based and non government organisations. The SINPA Coordinator and Steering Committee will engage with this process as it takes shape.

Throughout the design process, AusAID, DSE, and SINPA partners affirmed that cross-SINPA coordination should affirm DSE's role as the umbrella body for NGOs in Solomon Islands. Through DSE, SINPA will be well placed to inform the current development of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Home Affairs and the NGO sector; as well as other ongoing dialogue on the enabling environment for civil society in Solomon Islands – to be supported by the International Centre for Not for Profit Law (funded by NZAID) and the European Union Non State Actor Program.

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12. Sustainability

The project designs, which collectively make up SINPA, are based on an organic or endogenous model of change which encourages those who are the ultimate beneficiaries to become change agents themselves. From being `objects' of development they become `subjects' which drive their own development which is context and culturally specific.

In this way the SINPA program is different. It will avoid the pitfalls of supporting a `cargo' mentality of providing goods and services which are rolled out across the Solomon Islands. Instead it aims to support communities to mobilise their own capabilities and assets and manage change processes through modifying and improving their existing organisational structures.

The program aspires to be sustainable in two main ways:
- Firstly the work in communities is likely to be more sustainable because it will be driven by people themselves, building on their energies and supporting and developing their capacities to achieve their own change. Local CBOs, church groups, individual families, women/men and youth will be empowered through these processes to conceptualise and achieve change that they want on their own terms. Change which is culturally and locally relevant and which Solomon Islands see as theirs and therefore have a desire to maintain.

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[45] Chaired by Ministry of Development Planning and Aid Coordination, and including representation from several other Ministries, as well as all donors engaged rural development.
[46] For agreed terms of reference see appendix 6. Once again the added value of this group will be determined by the SINPA Steering Committee and discontinued if it is not adding value to the effectiveness of SINPA NGOs work.

- Secondly, the learning from SINPA about how to initiate and support effective, culturally relevant, community development in the Solomon Island context will be a sustainable outcome from this program. This program of work will be innovative and creative. Supporting that creativity and robust analysis of what works best in the Solomon Island context will be of tremendous value to the wider development community.

13. Cross cutting issues

A strong **power analysis** has been a feature of the SINPA projects' design phase. NGOs will seek to maintain this lens through implementation, so as to demonstrate more inclusive and equitable practice.

Gender

One of the design facilitators is a Solomon Island Gender Specialist who supported a clear gender focus in each of the project designs. During the design phase a two-day workshop was held in Honiara to sensitively explore issues of gender and power in Melanesian culture. NGOs have attempted to consciously integrate these perspectives into their design process with some success.

Each of the SINPA projects is working with both men and women in order to order to address issues of gender inequity. However each project addresses gender in slightly different ways;
- ICP will work through the family, involving male heads of household, the Church and the Mothers Union in order to address issues of intra-family violence, lack of voice in decision making, youth disengagement and societal breakdown.
- Oxfam, with its partners, will focus on reducing the level of violence against women. This project will work with men, women, families and communities to pilot appropriate strategies to address violence against women and change societal norms.
- Live and Learn's work is focused on inclusive integrated natural resource management. Strengthening gender equity, particularly in regard to decision making, is seen as key to enhancing community and environmental wellbeing.
- Both ADRA and Save the Children's work focuses on supporting young women and men's personal resilience and livelihood opportunities. Both agencies approach this work in a holistic way by working with the whole community.
- Finally, APHEDA's work to support the capacity development of Community Learning Centres will incorporate a strong gender focus. Analyses of the consequences of gender and power inequalities are a priority in capacity building.

Though the approaches are different, the objective is the same. Indeed, a valuable aspect of SINPA's overall learning will be how to work effectively and sensitively on gender in the Solomon Island context. This program will explore what strategies are most effective at achieving sustainable change.

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Disability

Inclusion of people with disabilities is a priority of the Australian Aid Program, and partners are committed to improving practice in this area. However, disability inclusiveness is new to most partners. This represents an opportunity for joint learning through implementation, and may require external inputs, including from People with Disabilities, Solomon Islands.

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14. Risks and Risk Management Strategies

The SINPA program faces a number of risks – both internal to the SINPA partnership and external to the program. Six key risks are outlined below[47]. Overall responsibility for monitoring these risks lies with the Steering Committee, which should review and update the overall risks and risk management strategies on an annual basis.

1. Low commitment to work together as one program. The integrity and trust of the partnership group (between AusAID and each of the NGOs; and between SI Partners) is essential to the effectiveness of this work. A break down in trust may jeopardize inter-agency cooperation and affect ability to share insightful lessons and reap the added value of SINPA engagement. Existing relationships developed under the previous NGO Cooperation Agreement proved a strong foundation; and SINPA is now firmly rooted in a cooperative, supportive design process. A SINPA Charter has been agreed by all NGOs and the SINPA Steering Committee will manage inter-agency relationships. SINPA NGOs are committed to respecting each others plans and accepting when one partner agency can not meet another's request. Regular Steering Committee meetings and commitment to an open trusting engagement will help minimise the potential risks involved in partnership clashes.

2. Staff turnover amongst partner agencies. A shared understanding of SINPA's objectives and approach is critical to its success. Managing staff turnover will be a challenge to maintaining the spirit of SINPA's approach. In particular, there is a risk that the parameters of this program may change over the course of the five years if AusAID staff change. If the freedom to explore Solomon Islander led, locally appropriate development changed, this would affect the program significantly. In order to minimise this risk, it is important that the SINPA program is well documented. Agreements on reporting formats, annual reflection processes and AusAID's commitment to this innovative program of work need to be transparently documented, and their spirit maintained by the Steering Committee. Partners have also discussed informal systems that could be used to induct staff new to the partnership. Within each agency, each NGO should ensure succession planning is adequately considered and resourced.

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[47] A risk matrix is included in annex 7.

3. Difficulty of working in a gender sensitive way in the Solomon Islands. Lessons from the former SINCA program indicate the difficulties of working well on gender issues in the Solomon Islands. A risk to the program is the potential to induce violent male backlash. To reduce this risk it is envisaged that a Solomon Island Gender Specialist will give on-going support to each of the SINPA SI Partners for the lifespan of the program and provide program wide advice on how to engage in collective processes (e.g. Annual Reflection Processes) which enable women's voices to be heard but do not jeopardize cultural norms or put people at risk[48].

4. Insufficient monitoring and evaluation experience.
SINPA's collective learning and analysis is dependent on each Partner developing simple, but robust, monitoring and evaluation processes. That is, M&E processes which enable Solomon Islander voices to be heard, which ensure accountability, which encourage on-going learning and which prioritise the `sense-making' (or analysis) process. These are skills which are not easy to source. Development of strong monitoring and evaluation has been a focus of discussions during the design phase. Clear monitoring and evaluation plans for each project are currently being developed. The Steering Committee is yet to decide what on-going support it requires across the SINPA projects however two roles have been highlighted:
a) The importance of providing **technical support** (perhaps in the form of a long-term Australian Volunteer) to support SI Partners who want to develop their skills in `participatory video' and/or other forms of video stories.
b) The value of **external M&E support** for both supporting the refinement of internal SINGO M&E processes and **facilitating the annual reflection processes** and synthesising the collective analysis of SINPA's progress.

5. Insufficient experience at implementing Solomon Islander-led, strengths based, community development processes. The fragile nature of many of the SI NGOs is a risk to the success of SINPA. Many of the NGOs are small and dependent on a few key staff who intuitively understand a `strengths approach' to community development and can work in ways which are creative and exploratory. Strong support to SI Partners will be key to SINPA's success. This support will come from ANGO partners who have written this into their design documents, but also from AusAID and external consultants. One important strategy that NGOs are using is to start `small', learn by doing and build on successes.

6. Social and political instability. Finally, the potential for social instability in the Solomon Island is a constant underlying risk. The SINPA program can not hope to avoid the repercussions of this. However, as a program it will endeavour to work intensively with youth in three of its projects and will actively work to increase community cohesion in all six projects. Partners have also developed considered strategies for managing potential tension between target and neighbouring communities. Indeed

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[48] There is a strong interest in seeking on-going support from a Gender Advisor during the course of this program, however this role is yet to be confirmed. This will be a decision for the first SINPA Steering Committee Meeting.

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improving Solomon Islander quality of life, in a Solomon Islander way, can only be helpful.

7. Tension between SINPA partners and other CSOs. There is a risk that the restriction of capacity building opportunities to SINPA partners may damage relationships between AusAID/SINPA NGOs and other community sector organisations. Opportunities to include other CSOs in training, exchange and learning events should be taken, and SINPA should also make conscious efforts to strengthen DSE's role as the national CSO peak body.

8. Weak organisational and financial management capacities. SINPA partners were selected on the basis of proven in-country capacity. All but one were part of the previous SINCA program (2004-08). Therefore, they have a track record of strong organisational and financial management, relative to other CSOs in Solomon Islands. This will be maintained with the support of their Australian partners, who have each passed the AusAID NGO Cooperation Program's rigorous accreditation process.