

# Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP)\*

## KEY RESULTS



Launching of BVR

### Sustainability and inclusiveness of the biometric voter registration (BVR) system: Ouput 1\*\*

- Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) expertise which identified software deficiencies and options for enhancement of BVR sustainability in terms of hardware, software and human/technical needs.
- Timely intervention of SECSIP expert mitigating risk of loss of BVR data due to system failure occurred in October 2017.
- Long standing benefits resulting from procurement of equipment (server equipment, spare parts, batteries for BVR kits, heavy duty printer, generators, laptops) and construction of database and results management centre to enhance continuity of electoral operational effectiveness.

\*\* Technical expertise provided until August 2018

### Supporting the capacity of the electoral national authority to manage an electoral cycle: Ouput 2

- Electoral Risk Assessment exercise conducted in June 2018. This assessment provided a critical tool for the identification of main electoral related risk factors and made recommendations on mitigation measures and mechanisms.
- Ongoing provision of electoral operations expertise instrumental for the planning/implementation of electoral events: Gizo-Kolombangara by-election; 2018 voter registration data capture, objections and public hearings (approx. 14,000); completion of the 2019 electoral roll (359,523 registrants). This involves the development of procedures, contingency planning and capacity building in connection with nomination, polling and counting.
- Key support to the coordination between the Electoral Office (EO) and Royal Solomon Islands Police Forces (RSIPF).
- 2018-2019 Graduate Program which identified and engaged 7 highly qualified staff providing key support in the areas of field operations, Information Technology (IT), logistics, human resources and voter awareness.



Gizo-Kolombangara By-election



Training of Revising Officers

\*Following the request of the national authorities, UNDP launched its electoral assistance project (SECSIP I, July 2013-June 2017). This was followed by a successive project (SECSIP II, July 2017 to June 2020) to support the enhancement of the national electoral capacities in preparation for the 2019 general elections and post electoral activities.

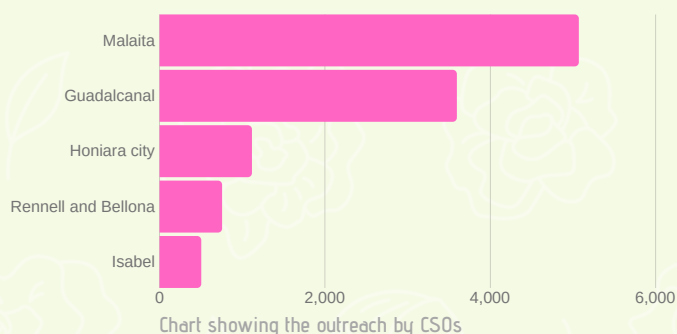
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## KEY RESULTS

### Enhancing the capacities of National authorities and local networks to train and educate on voter awareness: Output 3

*'I used to take money in exchange of my vote in past, but I will not take it any more as I came to know the penalties/punishment for such offences through the awareness campaign'.*

Mentioned by a female voter of West Fataleka, of Auki, Malaita Province



- **Civil society.** In 2015 SECSIP commissioned an extensive survey to evaluate voter awareness. Respondents (73%) identified face-to-face awareness as the best way to communicate and this was also considered the most trusted source of electoral information (70%). The survey was instrumental for the development of Solomon Islands National Strategy on Voter Awareness 2016-2019 and the rolling out of UNDP micro-grant program to establish alliances with civil society organizations. Through a competitive process, twelve CSOs\* were identified and received grants from SECSIP during 2017-18, enabling face-to-face voter awareness activities to reach out to 15,000 people across five provinces.
- **Youth.** In partnership with MEHRD, some 7000 students benefited from the support of SECSIP to the School Election Project which was implemented in five schools in Isabel and Guadalcanal provinces (October -November 2017). This project included session on good governance principles and conducted mock elections fostering a better understanding of teachers and youth on democracy and electoral processes.

*'The mock election activity helped me to understand better the election process and gave me confidence to walk inside the polling station to cast my vote when I reach my voting age'.*

Harry Mamata, Senior Student, Angaiho Community High School, Bellona Island

- **Media.** As a successive step to the MoU between the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI), the EO and SECSIP, a micro-grant agreement was established in July 2017. The focus of this collaboration has been knowledge building on electoral related aspects. Building on the 8 successful training sessions for Honiara media professionals held in April-May 2017, SECSIP supported the first ever election media training conducted for provincial media professionals. A total of 199 media professionals benefited from these trainings jointly facilitated by the EO, MASI and SECSIP in Honiara, Auki, Gizo.

*'We (provincial reporters) have always been overlooked. Media trainings in the past only occurred in Honiara, but we feel we are the focal points on contact when it comes to election to ensure a country-wide coverage of the processes.'*

Adrian Sina, a senior SIBC reporter based in Gizo



School mock election project

\* CSOs- NCW, GPCW, SIALC, VTT, TEFILA, HOH, Destiny Global, MASI, TSI, SOC, Melanesian Board of Mission, FOC,

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## KEY RESULTS

- The project provided technical advice for the identification, design and production of a range of awareness actions, channels and products. This has contributed to expand outreach and have a stronger and more fluid communication with the electorate. In addition to traditional products (voter registration and how to vote posters, leaflets, stickers, banners and manuals), the project supports SMS blasts, radio talkback show, TV spots encouraging voter registration aired during the FIFA World Cup and establishment of a telephone hotline to solve queries from the electorate. SECSIP proposed and established innovative strategies like the utilization of a commodity (SolRice) to disseminate voter awareness leaflets and booklets to reach out to small and isolated communities.
- Comprehensive upgrade of the EO institutional website resulting in a more user friendly, interactive and secure site with search engine providing key information for the electorate to confirm names and ID numbers included in the final voters lists. This has resulted in a substantial increase of traffic.



### Successful cooperation with SolRice private enterprise to maximise outreach

On 30 May 2018, SECSIP and SolRice, the country's leading distributor of rice, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on a pro-bono basis for the dissemination of voter awareness materials. SolRice helped the project maximise outreach through its extensive distribution networks around the country by disseminating 110,000 voter awareness leaflets ahead of voter registration. The Association of People with Disabilities (PWD) supported this activity by inserting leaflets into the self-adhesive envelopes adhered to 40lb bags of rice. In a second operation, SolRice assisted with the distribution of a similar number of Voter Education booklets before the 2019 general election.



### Support to electoral legal and administrative reform: Output 4

- SECSIP contributed to electoral legal reform by engaging a legislative drafter who worked with the Electoral Reform Task Force in drafting three bills for Cabinet approval: the Electoral Bill, the Political Parties Integrity (Amendment) Bill, and Constitution (Consequential Amendment) Bill. Upon adoption of the new Electoral Act, SECSIP contributed to the preparation of the subsidiary legislation via regulations. SECSIP proposed the revision of administrative forms to introduce the grounds for voter registration objections facilitating a more consistent and coherent decision-making process during public hearings.
- Facilitation of south to south / regional collaboration among political actors. SECSIP collaborated in the organization and supported the participation of the Solomon Islands delegation in the Pacific Regional Dialogue (Fiji, September 2017) and in the Pacific Political Parties Conference (September 2018). Participation in these fora provided an opportunity to analyze the legal framework underlying the development of political parties and its impact on political stability and consolidation of democracy. It also contributed to the sharing of information and experiences and to continue building networks of critical stakeholders from the Pacific region.
- Enhancement of capacities of the Political Parties Commission through the engagement of 3 SECSIP graduates supporting PPC legal, research and training units. The work of these graduates has made a solid contribution to the implementation of the PPC mandate particularly for the registration of new political parties and awareness actions in preparation for the national general election.

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## KEY RESULTS

### Promotion of women's leadership and political participation: Output 5

- Support to gender mainstreaming is addressed throughout all areas of project implementation contributing to enhance awareness of national authorities on women's political participation in voter registration, operations, media and legal aspects. An example of this was the Poster and Essay Competition on Women's Leadership which provided an avenue for debate and awareness raising on topics related to women political participation. A total of 210 secondary school students and teachers participated in this action. Another activity focusing on women's empowerment was the "Equality in education" film. This film was entirely planned, designed and produced by 15 women belonging to the Matakiki community in Bellona as a result of SECSIP grant with Village Technology Trust (VTT).
- Particular actions developed by SECSIP directly focused on women's political leadership include the commission of a research on Women's Leadership and Political Participation in 10 selected constituencies in five provinces: Central (Ngella and Russells/Savo), Honiara (Central Honiara and East Honiara), Isabel (Gao Bugotu and Maringe Kokota), Malaita (Fataleka and Lau/Mbaelelea) and Western (North Vella Lavella and West New Georgia). The Research contributed to a better understanding of the factors that inhibit and enable women's political representation and informed SECSIP strategy and action plan in support of women's political participation.
- The referred action plan 2018-19 is based on 3 premises: (a) need for long term nature of promotion of women political participation; (b) recognition of positive effects of short-term actions if framed within a long term perspective; (c) multi-layered approach, dealing simultaneously with various lines of action which include capacity building (pre-nomination and post-nomination trainings), working with media and resource support.

### Pre-nomination capacity building actions

Three-phase approach to contribute to improve the key leadership and political skills of intending women candidates for the national and provincial elections. First actions was a four-day National Women's Leadership Workshop held in August 2018 and attended by 60 national and international women leaders from the Pacific region including former PM of New Zealand, Ms. Helen Clark, Dame Carol Kidu from PNG and Hon. Salote Rarodro from Fiji.



This was followed by a four-day capacity participated by 35 Solomon Islands women leaders including 24 intending candidates for the national election. The workshop focused on issues related to democracy and the regulatory framework for elections, women public leadership at various levels and general aspects of women's confidence building and empowerment.



Poster and essay competition winners with quests