

Utilizing Talanoa/Tok Stori to enable community change

2023 Pacific Update

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The University of the South
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Ola Fou Solomons



Development Opportunity

- Solomon Islands is a youthful population.
- Majority of the population were less than 34 years (about 70% - National Census 2019)
- With seven in 10 Solomon Islanders under age 34, Solomon Islands' youth population is particularly visible on the streets of Honiara, where large groups of young people can be seen in public spaces and at events. (National Youth Policy 2017 – 2030)
- Youths are either neglected by the community elders in any decision-making structures or roaming around in the communities or call up when there is a need of their contribution in Labour work.
- Youths engage in negative activities because there is no economical activities to occupy them.



Brief Overview of Ola Fou Solomons



Vision

Building resilience in young people and communities in Solomon Islands

Mission

Empowering Solomon Islands young people by educating and equipping them to be agents of change in order to transform, restore and build resilience in vulnerable communities.

Goals

“Young Solomon Islanders are resilient and are working for positive change in their communities”

Brief Overview of Ola Fou Solomons



Core Values

- Faith: Journeying with Jesus
- Missional Engagement
- Learning in Action and Context
- Ongoing Communities of Learning
- Practice What We Teach
- Centre to the Margins
- Partnership with Indigenous People
- Learning spaces of Inclusion and Grace
- Excellence and Generosity
- Leading by Serving



Methodology

- Project Evaluation (after 3 years)
- External evaluation by K4Dev
- 5 communities covered

- Document review
- Key informant interview
- Focus Group Discussions.
- Participant and stakeholder surveys
- Participatory stakeholder workshop

Findings – ‘Part A: Successes’

“...the Crossroads project has been found to be very effective, with findings that 100% of survey respondents observing improved values among participating young people and observing improved self-reliance and confidence

. Such perspectives are further reinforced by evidence that the 19 trained youth have actively trained and mentored other youths in their communities, organised community resilience initiatives, and income-generating activities to finance activities for youths and care services for the elderly”

Findings – ‘Part A: Successes’

Community Youth Leadership

- Issue identified through the youths in support with the trained OFS graduate
- Community report back (consultation) with the wider community
- Action plans develop to respond to the issue identified.
- Setting up a working committee where it will have fair representatives (elders, women, skilled person, youth)



Findings – ‘Part A: Successes’

Community initiatives implemented by the youth, with support from the project included:

- Organic vegetable farming and sales,
- Water infrastructure, and sanitation Facilities,
- First aid training, and;
- Community clean-up campaigns.



Timo's Story



Findings – ‘Part B: Approaches to support achievements’

■ Strong and Regular Community Consultation & Collaboration

- Start of the project implementation we meet with the community, including the key people (chiefs/pastors/women leaders/youth and Sunday school) in discussing our intention
- Community aware of our intentions and what we expect from them as their contributions.
- OFS flexible when there is an uncontrol event/situation arise in the community and we make changes.



Findings – ‘Part B: Approaches to support achievements’

❑ Active involvement of customary and church leadership in supporting the youth

- Seek approval from the community when selecting candidates for technical training opportunities.



Findings – ‘Part B: Approaches to support achievements’

❑ Story Telling to Promote Dialogue and Change

- Culturally relevant approach
- Promotes local ownership
- Used to pass and share information
- Deepens connections
- Creates a joint narrative
- Recognises people as experts in their own lives.



Key Recommendations

1. Focus capacity building on demonstration/experience – based learning for Youth.
2. Ensure disaster management plan promotion is preceded by community vulnerability self – assessments.
3. Expand formative consultations to incorporate people with disabilities
4. Conduct future project activities in indigenous language of the partnered communities



THANK YOU

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