

A STATE OF GOVERNANCE STUDY OF NINE- COUNTRY PACIFIC CSOS

OXFAM IN THE PACIFIC – RAISING PACIFIC VOICES PROGRAM

A report on the State of organizational and influencing capacities of the national and regional civil society partners of the Raising Pacific Voices program (2017-2021)



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PACIFIC DISABILITY
FORUM

RAISING PACIFIC VOICES

REINFORCING PACIFIC CIVIL SOCIETY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This State of Governance Study of Nine-Country Pacific CSOs is based on organisational self-reflection and analysis in strengthening ways of working through mechanisms, processes and policies in the Pacific. It introduces a strategic, tested, lessons learnt way of working which is reflective of the needs of the Pacific people.

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ACRONYMS

Nei MOM	Nei Mom Uprising. CSO for single and young mothers who hope to inspire and motivate teen moms and young women in Kiribati
AMAK	Aia Maa Ainen Kiribati. The equivalent of the national Council of Women for Kiribati
BIMBA	Mauriia Binabinaine Association, Kiribati. LGBTQI CSO.
CYC	Chuuk Youth Council
EU	European Union
RPV	Raising Pacific Voices
KANGO	Kiribati Association of Non-Governmental Organisations. National Umbrella CSO, member of PIANGO
TANGO	Tuvalu Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
RPF	Rainbow Pride Foundation
PCC	Pacific Conference of Churches
PANG	Pacific Network on Globalisation
PCP	Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PRNGO	Pacific Regional Non-Governmental Organisations Alliance
COVID 19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
PSC	Program Steering Committee
SUNGO	Samoa Umbrella of non-Governmental Organisations
KiriCAN	Kiribati Climate Action Network
SICAN	Solomon Islands Climate Action Network
PICAN	Pacific Islands Climate Action network
MFF	
VMC	Vatu Mauri Consortium
SVIT	Soqosoqo Vakamarama iTaukei
RBTR	Rise Beyond the Reef
DSE	Development Services Exchange
REACHMI	Radiation Exposure Awareness Crusaders for Humanity Marshall Islands
MFF	Ma'a Fafine Mo e Famili A Human Rights Organisation in Tonga
TNCC	Tonga National Conference of Churches
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
K-SNEP	Kiribati State-NSAs Engagement Process

HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

The report is based on organisational self-reflection and analysis in strengthening ways of working through mechanisms, processes and policies in the Pacific. It introduces a strategic, tested, *lessons learnt* way of working which is reflective of the needs of the Pacific people. It is about examining systems, and systems thinking for Oxfam in the Pacific (OiP), for their staff and Partners.

The report encourages INGOs, donors and funders to support Civil Society Organisations (CSO) engaged in multi-stakeholder partnerships to support inclusive, sustainable and rights-based development for the people of the Pacific. This includes the poor and vulnerable women and men. The report recognises that OiP to be an effective, engaging and meaningful development partner whilst at the same time recognizes the need to adapt its ways of working, to be more strategic and to take into consideration the environment Oxfam works in.

The report also recognises and calls on development Partners to provide organisational support but more importantly engage without taking CSO space. The report also recognises the important role of Pacific tradition and customs in organisational governance and leadership. This report provides guidance and advice on how best to navigate both the formal and informal systems in organisational governance. It also provides case studies of CSOs and discusses the internal and external factors that influence its behaviour. The report is based on organisational experiences of Pacific CSO and comprises of 14 Sections.

This report is divided into 3 Parts. **Part One** provides the landscape in the Pacific Region. It consists of 4 sections. In Section 2, we examine the relationship of Pacific Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and their partners in the Raising Pacific Voices (RPV) programme. The different kinds of CSOs are examined and this include National and Regional CSOs. They make up the Pacific architecture in the region.

Section 3 explores the definition, the value of good Governance and the Organisation Capacity Assessment (OCA) Framework. We also included Safeguarding, a necessary component to the area of good governance.

Section 4 provides the purpose of this report, the importance of this report for Pacific CSOs and what this report hope to achieve.

Part Two of the Report looks at the methodology, and the application of the OCA, analysis and the results. This includes Case Studies to illustrate the OCA in use. Section 5 provides the methodology and approach, the OCA process and the scores for self-audit by CSOs. This section also provides the findings of the 2009 UNDP Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific and how it is different from the OCA.

Section 6 provides key findings of the OCA Toolkit for CSO partners in the Pacific, examining CSOs, their organisational structure, trends and conclusion. These are drawn from the results of the application of OCA. Factors scrutinized include cultural considerations as well as external contributing factors to the current state of CSOs in Section 7.

Case Studies are provided in Section 8 and these include Women's Organisations, National Umbrella Organisations and the constructive steps CSOs have decided upon to improve their own Organisations. Further to these case studies, Section 9 provides key learnings from the governance capacity strengthening experience of Pacific CSOs.

This is developed further into thematic areas in Section 10 in the OCAT under the RPV. Observations are made at the sub-regional level, the regional level as well as discusses the relationship with governments. Section 11 provides key learning in 2 regional Organisations, PRNGO as well as PICAN.

Part Three projects into the future of CSOs in the Pacific. We examine change, shifting paradigms, new CSO voices, identifying and addressing new issues and how Organisations are turning to technology to achieve their goals in Section 12. Section 13 examines cross cutting work which contribute to gender justice and inclusive development goals.

Section 14 is the last section and provides a summary with the hope that collaboration of CSOs within the Pacific will intersect with different groups, engage external partners and donors in a fast changing environment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pacific Development space is a regional development framework that engages countries in the Pacific. Through regional Organisations, national and state representation convene with Non-State actors to determine sectoral and multi-sectoral issues of development. This eventually translates to regional commitments and national policies that ultimately impact the lives of Pacific Islanders.

This report looks at the discussions and the assessment results that emerge from the Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) experiences with Civil Society Organisation (CSO) in 9 Pacific Island countries. This is to understand their organisational and financial governance, and how their influencing capacities translate to Pacific national and regional CSOs effectiveness in their shaping the national and regional policies.

Epeli Hau'ofa in his reflective essay "Our Sea of Islands" identify 2 levels of operation in Oceania. The first level comprises of national governments, regional and international diplomacy where the present and the future of the Pacific islands and its people are decided on. The players include politicians, bureaucrats, statutory body officials, diplomats and the military, representatives of financial and business communities, donors and international lending Organisations who are advised by academic and consultancy experts. These decisions then translate themselves as aid, concessions, trade, investment, defense, security, and take us deeper into dependency of the "powerful and rich nations."¹

Pacific Civil Societies is the second level. As with most CSOs around the world, they face similar struggles and challenges of organisational and financial governance. Stakeholders namely donors, national governments, regional Organisations and even international non-governmental Organisations tend to view Pacific Civil Societies as necessary but complicated partners in development work.

Decision making is examined at the regional level and at the national policy level and these offer different perspectives which Professor Hauofa discusses. Non-state Actors find that CSOs are grappling with internal issues such as keeping their houses and finance in order. The other perspective see this as deficiencies which need to be resolved.

At the same time the CSOs will continue in their sphere, contributing, resisting and finding platforms to speak in the global spaces. They are supported by their partners offshore and the local fundraising they try their best to gain. CSOs recognize that one of the strongest comparative advantages of the CSOs is that they have a constituency and the capacity for mobilization and in development work. This capability will contribute enormously to progressing and accelerating coverage, and accessing communities to work in. They work with the local social infrastructure in the areas of DRR, health, education, and even respond to COVID as we have found more recently. CSOs has assisted in raising awareness, in education, training, civic education and in health campaigns.

Secondly, CSOs have lifespans that extend beyond terms of government and administrations. They persist and insist on making important developmental, political, social, environmental changes at the local, national, regional and global levels.

1 Our Sea of islands, An essay by Epeli Hau'ofa in the book "A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of islands"

Many development partners and international organisations and global financial aid frameworks like UNDP and ADB to name a few, have as with Oxfam under the Raising Pacific Voices Programme (RPV) entered into the business of CSO capacity strengthening. Reports and bodies of work were rolled out right across the region to implement programmes. Huge amounts of resources have been expended to support the work. RPV Programme also sits in this category.

This report attempts to capture the important lessons, to translate this into a study that will allow for reflection, and will resonate, question and hopefully deconstruct how we approach the issue of organisational and finance governance. At the same time, the report provides CSO stories in the 9 countries. It provides an avenue to appreciate the volume of work that CSOs do while being continuously viewed as the complicated troublesome but necessary partner.

The learnings work both ways and ask the following questions. Even with the organisational and financial governance challenges, how do CSOs continue to be impactful? Whose responsibility is it to support the capacity strengthening of the civil society groups? Can influencing work be strengthened if the Organisational and financial challenges are addressed? Where and how can CSOs work more effectively and efficiently? What are the gaps and challenges and how do we address these?

The report is intended for all stakeholders and partners, including Community Organisations, Civil Society groups across the Pacific, regional NGOs, governments and INGOs.

Through the RPV programme, bravely partnered by Oxfam in the Pacific (OiP), Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Oxfam Australia (OAU) and funded by the European Union (EU), this report presents reflection and learning that is presented through the evidence and stories captured.

The report provides background and defines governance within the context of the RPV programme. It outlines the Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) of Governance, introduces the CSO partners, examines the results of the assessment, and provides comparative analysis thematically. It also does so at the sub-regionally level and provides in-depth case studies for 3 scenarios, and concludes with reflections and key learnings.

This report is a consolidation of learnings drawn from the OCA, SAFECAT and ICA processes that look to strengthen governance capacities for national and regional CSOs partnered under the EU-funded, PDF and OAU partnered RPV programme which was implemented by OiP.

SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) represent diverse groups and communities in society. They are essential and active representatives in the democracy process. They are also active partners in the multi-thematic and multi-sectoral areas of economic and social development in the Pacific. The report looks at the state of Governance of the civil societies in the 9 Pacific countries and more specifically from the narrative and evidence drawn from the Organisational Capacity Assessments (OCA) EU funded Raising Pacific Voices Programme undertaken by Oxfam in the Pacific.

Pacific CSOs provide experience, expertise, public opinion and knowledge to the process of decision making and policy implementation on a range of development issues. They contribute to discussions that lend to influencing policy changes. They operate through the access that their work affords them with a multitude of partners locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

The global pandemic COVID-19 has amplified the inequalities that exist between and amongst communities and citizens. The adverse impacts of the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen many Governments take on exorbitant public debt², increased threats to and or violations of human rights³, the scaling back on public policies and programmes⁴, which inter alia, aims to assist and raise the standard of living of the most vulnerable and marginalised in the community⁵. Therefore, the role of the Pacific CSO sector serves as a watchdog and is a catalyst for change. They play a pivotal role in holding the State accountable for its public policies and practices by applying standards required under the rule of law, human rights and democratic frameworks.

At the same time, the government holds the CSO accountable for their organisational and financial governance, scrutinizes their work and interventions in the community to ensure that they do not work against the national development strategies and goals. It is this tension of mutual accountability between civil societies and national governments that keeps them both relevant and current.

The legitimacy and credibility of a Pacific CSO as a watchdog and catalyst for change has come under close scrutiny from various perspectives: governments, donors, partners, CSO peers and the wider community⁶. The contracting civil society space⁷, the general decline in donor funds due to shifts in priorities, sources and approaches⁸ has called for CSOs to demonstrate “value for money” in all aspects of their work and impact⁹. These viewpoints have also made repeated calls for CSOs to improve their internal governance processes if they are to remain legitimate voices in the democratic process¹⁰. In other words, a CSO’s compromised framework also compromises its ability to deliver its own constitutional mandate and impact on public

2 See <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/11/covid-19-has-countries-borrowing-money-just-about-as-quickly-as-they-can-print-it/> [Accessed on 30 December 2020]; <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/what-pandemic-means-government-debt-five-charts> [accessed on 15 April 2021]

3 See Amnesty International Report 2020/21 : The State of the World’s Human Rights accessed at <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/amnesty-international-report-202021-state-worlds-human-rights-enarru> (accessed on 17 April 2021)

4 See <https://www.unicef.org/media/84181/file/UNICEF's-social-protection-response-to-COVID-19-2020.pdf> [accessed on 20 April 2021]

5 See [https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/05/27/na-05272020-pacific-islands-threatened-by-covid-19;file:///C:/Users/Buresova/Downloads/SEIA%20Fiji%20Consolidated%20Report%20\(3\).pdf](https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/05/27/na-05272020-pacific-islands-threatened-by-covid-19;file:///C:/Users/Buresova/Downloads/SEIA%20Fiji%20Consolidated%20Report%20(3).pdf) [accessed on 30 March 2021]

6 See <https://www.civicus.org/images/stories/CIVICUS%20Self-regulation%20Guide%20Eng%202014.pdf> [accessed on 1 April 2021]

7 See footnote 5 at page 3

8 See footnote 5 at page 3

9 See footnote 5 at page 3

10 See footnote 5 at page 3

policy. It can also undermine public confidence and trust in Pacific CSOs as effective watchdogs and catalysts for change.

Note that the terms “State” and “Government” are used interchangeably throughout this Report. Many CSOs in the Pacific face significant governance challenges. These governance issues were highlighted in the 2009 UNDP Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific Report¹¹. Although the 2009 report was published over a decade ago, the capacity challenges that go to the heart of governance among many Pacific CSOs remain. The report also provided reasons that persisted for the CSO in their governance challenges. This includes the attenuated pool of Pacific people to draw from to strengthen internal CSO governance and the absence of succession planning by a CSO Board to recruit people who are skilled and exercise integrity.

The Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) undertaken by Oxfam in the Pacific’s Raising Pacific Voices (RPV) Programme differs from the UNDP report in that it presents evidence of organisational and financial governance assessments. This is done through a process of member and constituency reflections in measuring the CSO’s status based on agreed upon measures. It is not based on a checklist of rigid governance standards. The analysis provides an agreed upon set of strategic critical milestones captured in the Organisational Capacity Development Plan. The milestones are mapped to illustrate the Organisation’s status in the Rebbilib. Section 4 and 6 spells this out in greater detail.

This report consolidates the full Organisational Capacity Assessment Toolkit (OCAT) assessment for the national and regional CSOs and extends in greater depth the observations of the UNDP Report of the 9 countries, and 3 sub-regions in the multi-thematic areas of development work.

The next section examines the CSO architecture nationally and regionally and how they play into the global platforms of influence.

The OCAT assessment tool has gone through various iterations. It was originally developed by Oxfam Vanuatu. The toolkit and modules went through a process of development with PIANGO, tested with several Fiji CSOs and then piloted in Tonga in the inception years of the programme. The intention was to develop a toolkit that would be fit for purpose and serve the programme. The OCAT has since gone through several more iterations, adding Safeguarding and developed the training for Online offer through a Distance and Flexible Learning format and framework.

This State of Governance report for the CSOs in the 9 countries could possibly be a baseline for possible future similar reports, charting the changes in the state of governance in the 9 countries.

The OCAT has, within the life of the programme, undergone 2 language translations, namely Kiribati and Samoan. The Training of Trainers with the CSO partners is now offered on the Online Distance and Flexible Learning platform.

11 See https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/library/democratic_governance/A_Capacity_Assessment_of_CSOs_in_the_Pacific_Six_Country_Profiles.html accessed on 30 December 2020

SECTION 2. PACIFIC CSOS AND PARTNERS TO THE RAISING PACIFIC VOICES PROGRAMME EXAMINED IN THIS REPORT.

1. UNDERSTANDING THE PACIFIC CSO ARCHITECTURE

In discussing the types of Civil Society Organisations, it might be best to look at the national and regional civil society architecture broadly across the Pacific in the 9 countries. The Civil Society groups have alignment in the community spaces. This includes Community Based Organisations (CBO), the national thematic national CSOs, the historic institutions such as the church and faith based groups, women's groups, youth groups, the traditional and customary structures and organisations, and more recently interest based organisations.

In the 9 countries visited, there are national umbrella body CSOs normally aligned to the Pacific Island Association of NGOs (PIANGO). A proxy umbrella NGO can be examined if one established by PIANGO is no longer viewed as effective. The umbrella NGOs usually have established history and relationships with the national government. In some cases, legislation recognizes the national umbrella CSOs as the CSO/NGO representative. All other CSOs and NGOs are usually viewed as the natural constituency of the umbrella NGO and in some cases, there is a membership subscription levied to the members.

The national umbrella has the role of active secretariat where it coordinates the work of the community through the thematic CSOs with the state. It is also expected to express and protect the interest of the thematic CSO members. In the event of development programmes, the umbrella CSO is expected to facilitate and coordinate the consultation between the State and the local CSOs. The national Thematic Lead CSOs also have natural and active relationships with other similar CSOs in other countries across the Pacific. This is usually in the areas of

Disability, Gender, Climate Change, Youth, Self Determination, Education, Health, Gender Justice, Economic Justice, Social Justice, and Gender Identity. The regional organisation like PIFS through its work with the Non-State Actors brings the national thematic leads across the Pacific together.

Many of the thematic leads are involved in providing alternative reports to the country performance in Human Rights Conventions, global development goals, climate change and gender conventions at UN. Furthermore, they have access to international conventions and national thematic CSOs by either creating them with their global partners or becoming part of the national representations in these spaces. The OCAT partners across the 9 countries all share and work in the spaces described above. They have levels of influence and constituencies. They have long histories and different levels of effectiveness in their influencing game.

2. BENEFICIARIES - COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS

When discussing the constituency framework, CBOs at the grass root need to be examined. These organisations may be developed for a very specific interest community development purpose, or is part of a requirement for a project. Examples of these are a health committee, or education committee. Their purpose is perhaps to be a part of a management committee for a school, or be located at the Health Centre working closely with the midwives and village nurses. There are many CBOs established for purpose. They may be part of a faith group, a youth sporting group, a farming or fishing project. They are informal in structure, which are not governed by constitution nor have strategic plans. They have leaders and regular meetings with very specific tasks directed by the

community or community leaders. The CBO form the constituency for the CSOs or NGO Thematic leads. The relationship is a mutually dependent one and the NGO thematic leads will offer support, guidance and partnership in common interest projects.

The report does not cover specific work with the CBOs. However, the OCAT process requires that the discussion covered constituency and in all cases the significance and relevance of the CBOs emerged as a fundamental partner for the thematic lead CSOs. Their work is dependent on strong working relationships with their CBO constituencies. The report will discuss this partnerships in greater detail in the later sections.

3. NATIONAL CSOS

The RPV programme looked to national CSO as partners for the capacity strengthening programme. The national CSOs included 2 bodies of CSOs: a) the Thematic Issue-based NGOs and b) the national umbrella CSOs. The latter were generally viewed as members and country representatives of the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO). For the purpose of this report, it will be useful to provide some definition for these 2 groups.

3.1 THEMATIC ISSUE-BASED NGOS

The CSO thematic leads covered by the programme included:

1. Gender and gender identity and sexual minority groups
2. Women in economic and social justice spaces
3. National Womens' Councils
4. National Indigenous Womens' bodies
5. Human Rights
6. National Christian faith Organisations aligned to the Pacific Council of Churches
7. Climate Change and Environment advocacy groups and networks
8. National Youth groups
9. Traditional and customary indigenous leadership and titleholders
10. Radiation Atomic Bomb testing survivors
11. Social Justice
12. Community development
13. Peace building and restorative Justice

The CSOs were engaged initially through an open call by the programme. Further into the programme, the partners were determined by a process that included due diligence and country scoping enabled by the PSC guidance.

3.2 NATIONAL UMBRELLA CSOS

The National Umbrella CSOs are viewed as the head NGO in a country whose members include the national thematic Civil Society Organisations. They are usually members of the Pacific Island Association of NGOs. They are recognized as the National Liaison Units who act as secretariat for the national thematic CSOs, liaising with national government and who ensure there are platforms for consultations and participatory engagements between the CSOs and the State.

The 7 national umbrella CSOs that were involved in different capacities in this exercise included the following:

- Development Services Exchange (Solomon Islands),
- KANGO (Kiribati),
- TANGO (Tuvalu),
- SUNGO (Samoa) and
- the Vatu Mauri Consortium (Vanuatu)

Although VANGO was the national Umbrella CSO, the Vatu Mauri Consortium (VMC) played a very integral role as a proxy Umbrella lead purely from the members who represented the 4 key pillars of the Vanuatu people (Chiefs, Women, Christian Churches and the Youth). While Tonga's CSFT did not take part in the OCAT, they were instrumental in the inception years; contributing towards the development and testing of the current OCAT tool. In Fiji's case, the programme undertook an informal OCAT Assessment. It referred to Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) for its planning and reflection exercise. The Assessment did not move to the next step of the full OCA process.

4. REGIONAL CSOS

4.1 PRNGO ALLIANCE

The Pacific Regional Non-governmental Organisation Alliance (PRNGO) is an active member of the PIFS Non-State Actors space, contributing to policy development through the various consultations coordinated by the secretariat. Oxfam worked with PRNGO alliances, utilizing OCAT in the development of a regional influencing policy.

Members of the alliance include the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC), PIANGO, PANG, Pacific Women in Fisheries (PACFAW), WWF (Pacific), and Pacific Centre for Peacebuilding, Pacific Youth Council, Council of Pacific Education, Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre, and Foundations of the Peoples of the South Pacific (FSPI).

4.2 PICAN

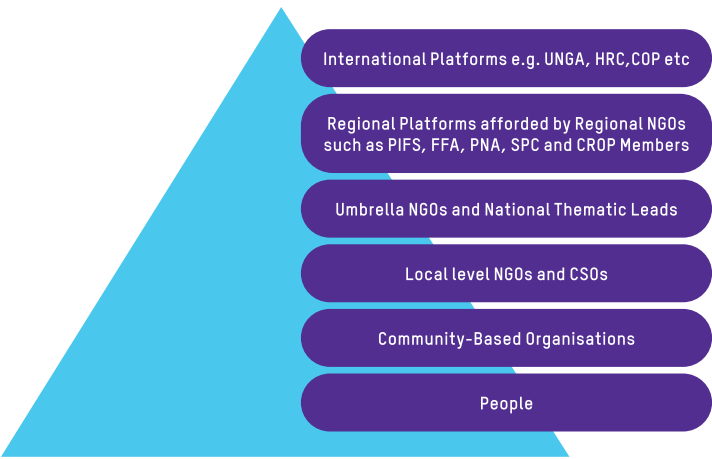
The RPV programme also worked with the Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) undertaking a full OCAT Assessment in developing an Organisational Capacity Development Plan. As an extension to this work, the programme Capacity Building Advisor was engaged to undertake the same role for the Solomon Islands Partner to the network SIKAN.

5. NOTES AND REFLECTIONS

The partners engaged in the RPV programme do not represent all of the civil society members active in the 9 countries. They only represent those who were identified under the open call, initially identified by PIANGO. Country scoping exercises were undertaken by the team before partnerships were created. The regional influencing platform enable members and partners to collaborate, for example in the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, the platform provided an avenue to influence critical development policy changes which in turn influences national policy changes based on their commitment.

This can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Cascading Influencing platforms for Pacific CSOs



SECTION 3. WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNANCE AND ITS RELEVANCE TO PACIFIC CSOS UNDER THE RPV PARTNERSHIP?

1. DEFINING GOVERNANCE IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION CONTEXT

Generally, “Governance” means: the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). The term Governance can be used in several contexts such as national governance, local governance, corporate governance and international governance¹².

Good governance and its application to the internal operations of a CSO has gained prominence in the accountability discourse globally, regionally and nationally¹³. The ability of a CSO to manage, coordinate and control its resources can be derived from some of the following documents: the national legislation that governs a CSO, a CSO’s Constitution, the Strategic Plan, finance policy, human resources policy; and any other written and relevant policies and law that impacts the operations of the CSO.

Governance demands that a CSO acts in a legal and ethical manner when implementing the good governance frameworks. Issues such as preventing cronyism, nepotism, making a clear declaration of interest, recusing oneself if a CSO Board member has a personal interest are some case scenarios where ethical imperatives must be exercised and documented.

Governance demands that accountability is exercised through internal processes of a CSO. This is to implement transparency, equitability and responds appropriately to the needs of the beneficiaries. There are 8 major good governance characteristics identified by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). These are:

1. Participatory. It ensures that a CSO through its Board, management and members are engaged in the decision-making processes of the CSO,
2. Consensus oriented. It requires that a CSO’s governance processes facilitate the reaching of a decision through dialogue and amicable solutions are reached, that is, it is a ‘win-win’ outcome.
3. Accountability. It means that a CSO including the Board and the management are responsible for the operations of the CSO and they are liable accordingly.
4. Transparent. It means that the CSO conducts its operations in an open manner, without secrets.
5. Responsive. It means that the CSO Board and management are responsive in ensuring that governance policies and practices are upheld at all times.
6. Effective and efficient. It means that a CSO conducts itself in a manner which is cognizant of time and the urgency of a matter.
7. Equitable and inclusive. This means that the CSO Board and management are fair and not discriminatory in their allocation of tasks and who is assigned or delegated to be a part of or to undertake a task.
8. Follows the rule of law. This means that the CSO Board and management’s policies and practices are exercised in accordance with the law and in an ethical manner at all times.

¹²See <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf>.

¹³See https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-0-387-93996-4_554 (accessed on 30 December 2020)

These general, broad and accepted characteristics of good governance can be used for CSOs, to ensure greater transparency, accountability and clarity in the processes of managing organisations. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into consideration and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society,¹⁴ or that of an organisation.

2. VALUES THAT GUIDE GOVERNANCE

An important element of Governance was the values that became the assessment criteria and benchmarks in OCAT assessment. However, relationships are an important element of engagement. Development projects and programmes can move, stall, accelerate, and deviate, depending on the quality and state of relationships. The currency of the relationships are in most instances measured by real and perceived values and serve as yardsticks where partners measure their commitment to any partnerships.

The same set of values also define the quality of governance and the report highlights this in the later sections. In short, a functioning civil society which ticks all the boxes in organisational and financial governance may find it difficult to advance its work because the stakeholders and civil society partners perceive that the organisation is exploitative, extractive intellectually, disrespectful of culture and traditions and practice, and ruthless in fundraising approaches at the expense of the local CSOs.

In an interesting way, this tension of testing accountability is based around the demand to respect the values that underpin good healthy relationships and keeps CSOs operating with integrity, justice and respect, as a general rule.

3. GOVERNANCE AND THE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The Raising Pacific Voices Organisational Capacity Assessment Toolkit examines the key components of full Governance in a civil society organisation. It provides the space for all organisation members and key representatives— Board, management, members and constituents to be engaged in a guided self-assessment of the organisation. In the process, these assessor agree on the status of their Organisation in the following areas:

- governance
- organisational structure and management
- human resources
- finances and
- collaboration and influencing

At the end of the self-assessment, the organisation and their members agree on the status of their organisation for the 5 areas of assessment and determine where they are placed under the following 5 areas of growth:

In the self-assessments of the 5 areas, the assessors come to an agreement which growth stage the organisation is at, with planting at the lowest stage and harvesting as the highest stage.

1. planting
2. seedling
3. maturing
4. harvesting

The results are then plotted and captured in a spider graph to represent their current state of play. This self-assessment and consensus can serve as the baseline to develop strategies to progress their development in the 5 areas.

¹⁴ See footnote 11

Taking into account that all things are at different stages in their Organisation, an organisation's context is unique and exclusive to their experience, access or lack of access to resources and challenges to capacity development expertise. The Organisation will plot a path to move their Organisation forward based on what is the most logical and realistic way forward. They plot this in what is called a *Rebbilib* (reference to the Micronesian shell maps that charts the currents) that is very much an organic and realistic process, a graphical display of their self-assessment.

The OCAT Assessment Toolkit, with regards to Governance looks at the status of the Civil Society Organisation's governance in relation to context, relationships, access to capacity and presents a fuller picture of the state of governance that is beyond the ratings of the 8 principles of governance presented by UNESCAP. It also focuses on the potential rather than the attrition. The assessment allows the organisation to not obsess over the weaknesses but rather focus on the real and tangible ways forward.

4. SAFEGUARDING AND GOVERNANCE

In addition to the OCAT toolkit, the RPV program consolidated the Safeguarding assessment as a means of re-emphasizing the values element of Governance in the consideration that principle of do no harm goes hand in glove with development work. The assessment for Safeguarding draws its origin from the Oxfam experience in Haiti and lends the same significance and importance in the development work in which many CSOs are engaged in.

The Safeguarding toolkit is designed specifically for CSOs and draws from a strong Pacific context. It focuses on the 4 key pillars or actors in the Pacific civil society space and these are the following:

1. Churches;
2. Traditional Institutions;
3. Women's CSOs; and
4. Youth Organisations.

The Safeguarding assessment tool, much like the OCAT toolkit allows for organisational self-reflection and in that egalitarian space provides the opportunity to determine for themselves where they are in the 4 stages of growth (seedling, planting, maturing and harvesting). The discussion and self-assessments looks at whether they have policy to protect the vulnerable groups, whether they have procedures, committees and whether or not they enforce it as part of their standard practice and operating procedure in the implementation of their programmes.

SECTION 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

1. IMPORTANCE OF A STATE OF GOVERNANCE AND INFLUENCING REPORT FOR PACIFIC CSOs UNDER THE RPV PROGRAMME?

This Report is designed to inform Oxfam and its Partners on the Governance areas which will require support, and to assist in building capacity of CSO stakeholders. It highlights the uniqueness of Pacific CSOs, and the importance of finding locally based and Pacific centric solutions in addressing the universal principles of good Governance at the national and in the region. Having sound governance structures e.g. policies and processes which are implemented in an ethical manner, a CSO can elicit confidence from both donors and partners to support ongoing activities. This Report is an essential step in ensuring that the governance structures of CSOs are strengthened in a sustainable manner in order for CSOs to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

This Report acknowledges that discussion on CSO Governance is an extremely difficult, sensitive and complex one as it is linked to people, occasionally, iconic founders and leaders of Organisations and movements who have strong public profiles. However, Oxfam's approach to use voluntary self-assessment to gather initial data, following-up with independent verification processes of emails, use of semi-structured interviews face-to-face and through video conferencing- ZOOM, is evidence of Oxfam's ability to garner confidence of partners to participate in this self-reflective exercise. It is also a testament of participating CSOs' openness to scrutiny, given that some respondents are iconic leaders in the CSO sector. These are very positive signs.

More importantly, this report presents critical reflection that redefine Governance as the steps based on the RPV partners demonstration of OCAT evidence and experience. OCAT assessments and discussions that emerge in developing their organisational capacity plans and charting their milestones in the Rebbilib present an interesting and constructive approach to addressing Governance. The sample while small, is counterbalanced by the volume of influence these have in their national and regional influencing spaces, and as a quantitative measure of organisational gravitas.

Journeying through the life of the OCA programme presents a baseline. With the introduction of OCAT online format for the training of trainers of CSOs, the same Organisations can measure as to whether they are progressive or otherwise.

For the project, the assessment tool for OCAT focused on Governance and Safeguarding, strengthening the influencing capacity of the regional actors with the ultimate purpose of allowing for the people of the Pacific through these structures to influence policies of development at the regional, national and local levels. This aligns with the RPV Programme goals.

2. WHAT DOES THIS REPORT HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

Pacific CSOs are unique in many ways as they support the development aspirations of their States despite the many governance and financial limitations that they operate in. Pacific CSOs are at the forefront of mobilizing communities and ensuring their voices are heard on a range of development issues in the Pacific. These range from nuclear disarmament to climate change, human rights, gender justice, protection of natural resources, women empowerment, rights of persons with disabilities and other thematic issues that are vital to the democratic set of Pacific States. Various Pacific CSOs have been instrumental in holding States accountable on a range of issues and also mobilizing resources to build capacity and knowledge in these issues.

This Report investigates the Governance structures of Pacific CSOs particularly those within the Shifting Power, Shifting Voices (SPSV) project under Oxfam in the Pacific (OiP). The investigation seeks to navigate the issues that are confronted with whilst recognizing the country context of the CSO. The OCAT provide the space for CSOs to examine their contextual background, in order to strengthen their governance framework towards a more “inclusive, transparent, accountable and effective” organisation.

The objectives of the Report are -

- (a) To provide an overview of the Governance landscape of national and regional CSOs in the Pacific region. This insight into the governance landscape at both the national and regional levels is imperative as it sets the scene and provides an understanding on the governance journey of a CSO in the Pacific region.
- (b) Discuss the capacity constraints that regional and national CSOs face within and across the Pacific region.
- (c) Provide an assessment of the state of Governance of these CSOs;
- (d) Propose recommendations for strengthening CSOs and their Governance mechanisms through the development of policies, practices, strategies and tools targeted at one of the multiple perspectives so the CSO can better serve their constituents.

The report seeks to identify the Governance challenges faced by CSOs and propose possible ways to address the challenges. It is meant to provide guidance and identify the opportunities that CSOs can work towards in strengthening their governance mechanisms. While the issue of Governance is universal, Pacific CSOs also have valuable Pacific-centric mechanisms which can contribute to building stronger Organisations. These include the use of cultural values such as respect, honour, and dedication within the leadership structures. These values can be applied to personnel and to the processes within the Organisation, strengthen community, relationships and networks. Values such as loyalty, honesty, and faith when applied contextually can also strengthen the governance culture of the CSO.

SECTION 5. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The report was guided by a systems analysis approach. To ensure rigor in the analysis of the data, a mixed method was utilized. This included a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection method. The triangulation of these methodologies informed the shape and content of the Report. The combination of desk review, drawing from the 9 countries and the respective CSO partners, and the use of interviews with key informants and focus group discussions were undertaken. The pertinent issues raised in the discussions, the assessment results of the OCAT reports, the semi-structured interviews, use of the 2009 UNDP reports and literature were consulted to form the basis and the analysis of this report.

A desk review was conducted by the consultants analysing the data obtained by the Raising Pacific Voices team through the consultative workshops, the results of the semi-structured interviews and the 2009 UNDP report. Where appropriate, the consultants undertook online research. The report was developed through the comprehensive analysis of the responses to the interview questions of the key informants. Results of the OCAT exercise were utilized.

The methodology and approach focuses on the OCA, Safeguarding Capacity Assessment Guide and the Influencing Capacity Assessment (ICA). The processes of assessment that elicit the reflections and learnings are consolidated for the purpose of adding to and contributing to the discussion.

1. DESK REVIEW

1.1 THE OCAT REPORTS

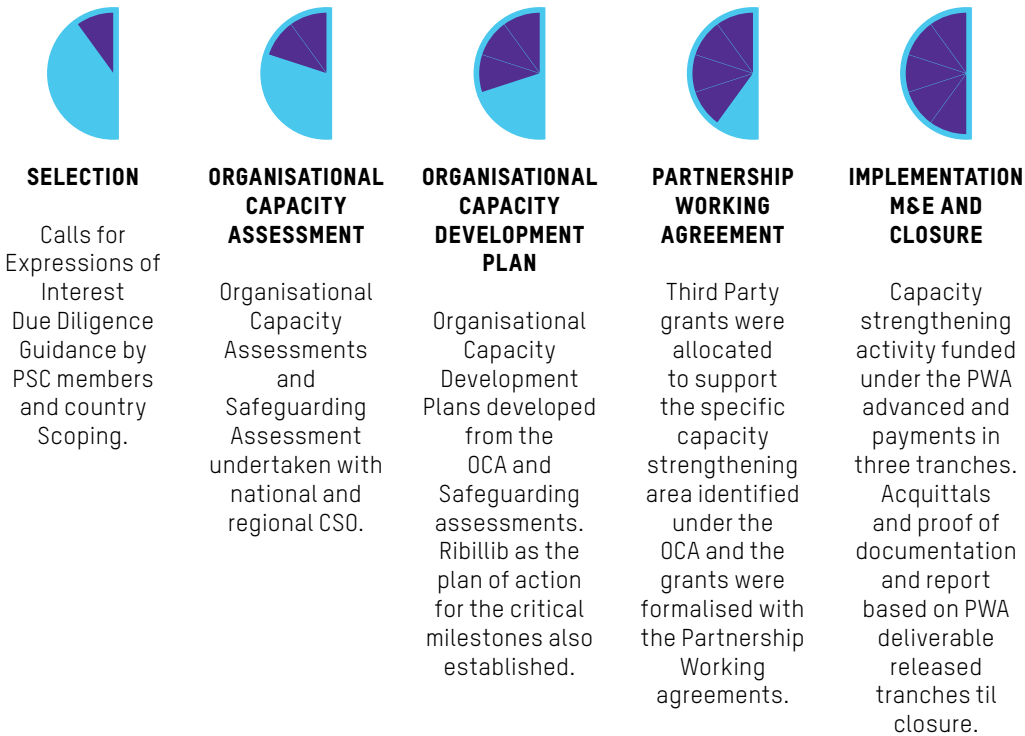
The OCAT and Safeguarding Assessment reports constituted a major part of the desk review. The desk review was conducted by analysing the data obtained by the RPV team through the consultative workshops.

THE FULL OCA PROCESS

The Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) is a process and is outlined and illustrated in Figure 2. An Organisation begins with the initial selection process and progresses through the various stages over the 4 year period.

The Organisational Assessment was undertaken as a workshop in country. The Organisational Capacity Development Plan (OCDP) is based on the assessment of identified organisational and financial governance gaps. A series of activities is recommended with budgeted deliverables in the final OCDP to address the identified gaps. This is in the form of Partnership Working Agreement. The agreement sees a third party grant given to the recipient CSO. This process is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The Full Organisational Capacity Assessment and Support Process















BRIEF INSIGHT INTO THE OCAT VOLUNTARY ASSESSMENT BY THE PARTNER CSOS

Workshops were convened on organisational capacity assessments. Partner CSOs utilized the Organisational Capacity Assessment Guide for Pacific Civil Society Organisations developed under the RPV Project (Step 2 of Figure 2).

In the OCAT workshop assessments, Gender and Safeguarding emerged as critical issues. The mapping process in the “Rebbilib”¹⁵ gave partner CSOs a visual representation to determine priority governance issues within their CSOs which required immediate or phased long-term actions. An example is provided in Figure 3

15 The term “rebbilib” refers to stick charts which were used by Marshallese navigators to navigate the ocean. The stick charts represent the major ocean swell patterns and ways the islands disputed those patterns, etc. By using this analogy, the CSO and their partners were led through an exercise allowing them to reflect on identified strengths and weaknesses of the organization in the different areas, prioritise which areas require a shift in capacity, whether external or internal within their CSO and finally understanding the links between each and how a shift in one area of capacity would impact on another. These were also mapped through a participatory process.

Figure 3: Example of a Rebbilib based on the Organisational Self-Assessment

WOMEN IN FISHERIES NETWORK FIJI "GOVERNANCE" ASSESSMENT						
#	Indicators	Comments on self assessment				
1.0	Governance Structure & Mechanisms		Planting	Seedling	Maturing	Harvesting
1.1	Purpose of the CSO	No membership meeting. Members not sure of organisational structure.				
1.2	Registration with local authorities	Compliant with all legal and financial requirements.				
1.3	Governance of the CSO	No Board of Trustees. Only have 2 Board members				
1.4	Constituency of the CSO	This is a work in progress. Validity of RCA Research				
1.5	CSO Goals and Strategy	Board of trustees has resigned. Annual General Meeting scheduled to be held in December.				
1.6	Process of membership of Governance structure	Waiting for elections. No Annual General Meeting was held last year.				
1.7	Board accountability & transparency	Minutes are tabled at Staff meetings				
1.8	Financial sustainability of the organisation	Board not raising funds. All projects due to end in May 2021. Mobilisation Advisor. High Risk and Time limitations				
			Planned actions as per Rebbilib			
			(a) Establish a full Board; (b) Review Board composition and Constitution			
			(a) Exit Strategy for all sites; (b) Establish a network and partnership			
			(a) Strategic Plan to be comprehensive and realistic			
			(a) Review membership structure; (b) Review membership fee			
			(a) Create Job descriptions for Board members			
			(a) Board to look for funding			

In 2019-2020, the in-country consultative workshops with 23 CSOs were facilitated by the RPV. This was an important part of "fact gathering" The workshops ensured that the process was locally driven and information shared by the various CSOs was based on their lived realities, and assessment of issues. Multiple lenses was applied to the information gathering. Multiple perspectives were elicited based on the roles people brought in.

The perspectives could be from within, based on a leadership role they played (organisational) or as a Pacific Islander (cultural). The outsider perspective was also included. (For example. a Fijian assessing RMI based on their experience in Fiji) These 'independent assessments of existing policies and procedures' were utilized to inform on the status of Governance within the Pacific CSO.

Voluntary self-assessments by each of the 23 CSOs focused on 5 governing areas in the OCAT¹⁶:

1. Governance
2. Organisational Structure and Management
3. Human Resources
4. Finances
5. Collaborating & Influencing.

The results were put into Excel sheets by RPV facilitators with the assistance of CSO partners.

¹⁶https://www.pasifikarising.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/OCA_Guide_Final.pdf (accessed on 2 December 2020)

Illustration 4: The frame of the Fale that represents the areas of assessment

1.0 GOVERNANCE

The governance of CSOs is undertaken by a body that is responsible for ensuring that the organisation is working towards its stated objectives and that it is operating within the law, within its policies and budget. Where the organisation has staff, the board holds those managing the organisation to account for organisational performance. Beyond legal requirements, the board is expected to act in the best interests of the whole organisation, not in the best interests of any particular individual or group. This governing body may have different names, including board, committee or council.

Furthermore, each of these 5 areas had their quantitative indicators to guide the Organisation in their self-assessment. While these quantitative indicators are relevant, they needed strengthening with insights into the cultural nuances and contextual notions of ethics which influence the state of governance within Pacific CSOs. The addition of the qualitative methodology through semi-structured interviews filled that vacuum.

For the purpose of critically analysing the State of Governance of CSOs in the Pacific, it was agreed by the consultants and Oxfam in the Pacific that the Governance area of human resource would be excluded from the Report. Rather, the Report focuses on critically analysing all the quantitative indicators for these OCAT governance areas: Governance, Organisational Structure and Management, Finances and Alliances and Collaborating and Influencing. Analysis of the governance area of Collaborating and Influencing was confined to the quantitative indicator – ‘Alliance’ only.



1.2 POPULATED EXCEL SHEETS APPLYING THE OCAT

The RPV Team used: an Organisational Capacity Assessment Toolkit (OCAT) and the Influencing Capacity Assessment Tool (ICAT) to inform the self-assessment approach that the CSOs used to assess their respective frameworks and practices.





Against this background, Oxfam RPV Team constructed and populated Excel sheets with the assistance of the participating CSOs, applying the 5 areas supported by the quantitative indicators. Metaphors were linked to the stages of plant propagation. Planting, Seedling, Maturing and Harvesting was used as a measure to determine whether a CSO had complied with the various quantitative indicators which provided an overview into the state of Governance in these CSOs. The icons used depicted the various stages of growth of the CSO and included 8 specific criteria of which the CSO was assessed by.

These criteria were-

1. Purpose of the CSO;
2. Registration with local authorities
3. Governance of the CSO
4. Constituency of the CSO
5. CSO Goals and Strategy
6. Process of membership of governance structure
7. Board accountability and transparency
8. Financial accountability of the CSO.

The icons represented the planting stage which is the lowest stage in the OCAT, seedling stage which is the second stage, maturing stage which is the third stage in the OCAT and the Harvest stage which represents the highest stage in the OCAT (see Figure 5).

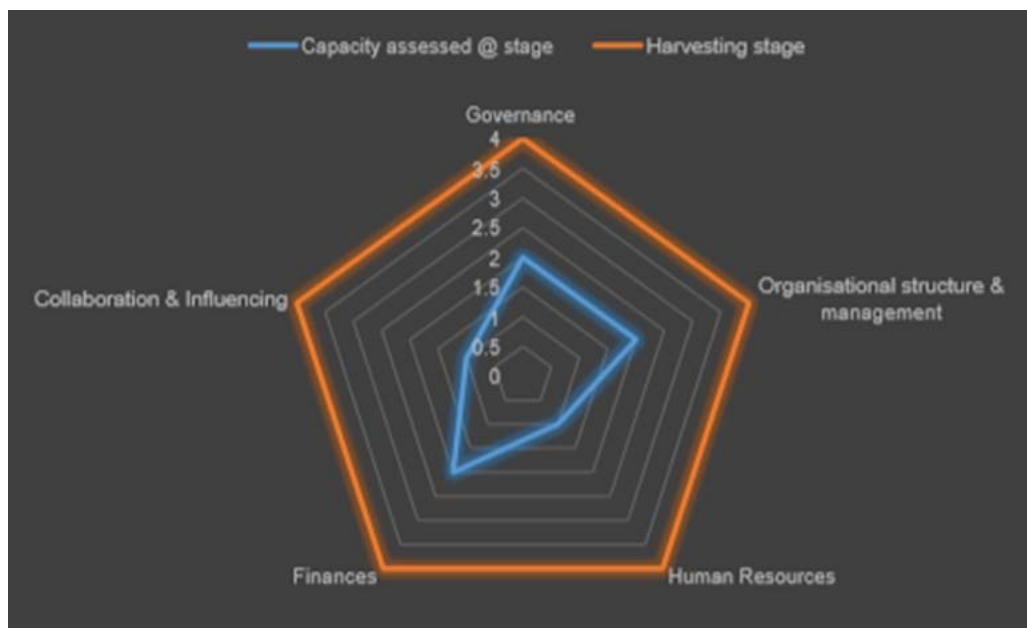
Figure 5: The assessment levels using the stages of plant growth

STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE CSO Every organisation is established for a purpose. This is usually documented in a constitution or a mission statement. The constitution is usually the first document that authorities will review to determine if a CSO is eligible to be registered. It goes further than a mission statement, setting out the responsibilities of the board, the executive and the members. The document provides the framework for steering the CSO, and for inspiring and motivating volunteers, staff, members and donors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the purpose of the organisation? 2. Is there a constitution or other document that sets out the purpose or mission of the organisation? 3. Do staff and members of the board know the purpose or mission of the organisation? 4. How is the constitution, purpose or mission used by the board? 5. When was the last time these documents were reviewed? 			
	There is no clear or collectively held purpose or mission for the organisation.	A constitution, or documented purpose or mission statement exists but there is limited awareness of what this is.	A constitution, purpose or mission statement exists, which all board members agree on and are able to articulate.	Board members regularly refer to the vision or mission to guide decisions. All the activities of the CSO are aligned with the vision or mission.

The individual assessments with the results of their stages were plotted. For example, if the Purpose of CSO (in Figure 5) was ranked with a score of 3, i.e. classified as maturing, it would be plotted as the coordinate 3. The coordinates were joined to give a visual

representation in the spider graph –the Rebbilib. When the points are plotted closer to the centre of the spider graph, the CSO is at a very early stage of development. When the points are closer to the outer circle, the CSO is at a more mature state of growth (Figure 6).

Figure 6: The spider graph that captures the state of growth in organisational and financial governance.



2. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The consultants conducted semi-structured interviews with 9 key informants from CSOs in December 2020. The consultants and Oxfam in the Pacific agreed that the CSOs sample needed to be purposive and not randomly selected as it was based on factors that lay external to the ambit of the OCAT. The criteria were as follows:

The criteria were as follows:

1. Selecting CSOs on a regional basis
2. Main funding source(s)
3. CSO management: paid staff or volunteers
4. Age of the CSO
5. CSO namely whether it was a women's organisation, youth, faith based and or LGBTQI issues
6. Umbrella Organisation
7. Network Organisation
8. Thematic/Issue based CSO
9. Faith based organisation

While interviews produce results that cannot be generalised beyond the sample CSOs, they remain useful as they provided an in-depth understanding of a CSO's perceptions and motivations as it concerns the governance of the selected CSOs. The guiding questions for the semi-structured interviews is located in Appendix 4.

3. 2009 UNDP CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN THE PACIFIC

The 2009 UNDP Capacity Assessment of Civil Society Organisations in the Pacific came in a package of 3 resources: (i) a Capacity assessment of CSOs in the Pacific; (ii) a Capacity assessment of CSOs in the Pacific – 6 Country Profiles; and (iii) a Capacity Development Plan for CSOs in the Pacific.

The first Report presented the overall findings of the UNDP Pacific Centre. This was the study of CSO's capacity and needs at the time. It also provided an overview of the CSO community in the Pacific and a detailed presentation of the methodology that was used in the assessment exercise.

The second Report presented CSOs in 6 Pacific countries. It provided a more detailed account of the state of Civil Society in the Pacific region. The third Report provided for a feasible action-oriented plan aimed at addressing the capacity challenges delineated by the assessment exercise.

4. LIMITATIONS

The key limitations of these reports were the following;

- (a) the framing of the capacity constraints and challenges experienced by CSOs under country profiles was broad and not nuanced;
- (b) while the definition and scope of "governance" was necessarily implied from gleaning the 5 areas used to assess capacity challenges of CSOs – organisational development; sustainability; information sharing, stakeholder relations and legal and regulatory framework, the reports did not provide a critical analysis of the cultural and ethical practices (contextualised to the Pacific region or country-specific) that have led to the capacity challenges in the governance of a CSO;
- (c) These reports were silent on the limitations with the research methodologies adopted for the said resources;

- (d) The report was based on a blend of quantitative and qualitative data. It included a small sample of CSOs in 9 countries in the thematic area of governance;
- (e) The political, socio-demographic and cultural perspectives as it relates to governance of CSOs is specific to the 9 countries and CSO contexts therein. This report therefore does not intend to assume transferability of findings;
- (f) The thematic areas and the thematic leads covered as partners speak only for the specific areas covered by the OCAT assessment. It does not intend to reflect the full developmental landscape of the countries covered.
- (g) The OCAT assessment does not include any form of perception survey undertaken with its stakeholders and partners including the national government. The engagement was with only a limited number of community based partners, for the purpose of obtaining any initial perception of the CSO partner's state of governance.

5. DELIMITATIONS

To address the above limitations, the Report acknowledges while the small sample of the semi-structured interview size was 9, the choice of CSOs rested on the universality of the above criteria to the Pacific region.

In the analysis of the assessment and its contribution to the discussion on governance, the Report speaks to evidence based assessment on very specific and measureable set of criteria. These can be viewed as a baseline and for future reports.

This report can also serve as a yardstick and a baseline to measure the changes if these respective CSOs are revisited. This is in contrast to the general focused group discussion on general observations and perception, which generally has been the measure in the previous reports, including the UNDP 2009 Pacific CSO report on governance.

Secondly, this study prefers to stay within the parameters of the programme OCAT assessments and understanding that the reach and coverage and constituency of the partner CSOs are already significant at their respective national spaces. The self-assessment can therefore speak for their specific contexts. The discussion on perspective will expand this discussion further.

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The conduct of the RPV Team and the consultants was couched in the values and principles that apply to all research; that is, the data collections methods were conducted in a way that ensures respect, research merit and integrity, beneficence and justice.

For the interviews conducted by the consultants, consent was obtained prior to each interview. The Report objectives and expectations of the interviewees and participants were clearly explained before each interview. This enabled participants to make informed decisions about their participation. Individuals were free to decide if they did not wish to participate. Individuals who agreed to be involved were able to stop the interview at any time and/or withdraw from the interview if they did not wish to continue.

Apart from gleaning from the interviews, the Report includes the evidence and data gathered from the OCAT assessments. Section 6 covers the OCAT assessment results and does not name the CSO per country, rather it identifies the thematic areas.

SECTION 6. KEY FINDINGS ARISING OUT OF THE APPLICATION OF THE OCA TOOLKIT FOR THE RPV CSO PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC

This section looks at the Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) results for the CSO RPV partners in the areas of Organisational and Financial Governance. It covers the following areas: a) Governance, b) Organisational Structure and Management, c) Finances and d) Collaboration and Influencing

a. Governance:

- i. Purpose
- ii. Registration
- iii. Governing body
- iv. Constituency
- v. Goals and Strategy
- vi. Board recruitment
- vii. Board accountability and transparency
- viii. Financial sustainability

b. Organisational Structure and Management

- i. Organisation structure
- ii. Organisation policy and procedures
- iii. Organisation review

c. Finances

- i. Record keeping
- ii. Financial and cash management
- iii. Bank Account and cash box
- iv. Cash and bank reconciliation
- v. Cash flow management
- vi. Financial reporting
- vii. Management and sharing of financial reporting
- viii. Budgeting
- ix. Expense management
- x. Procurement
- xi. Asset management

d. Collaboration and Influencing

- i. Alliances

This section will look at the results from each section (a-d) and draw clear and obvious trends with a narrative to account for, as well as provide the story behind the data and the ratings. Sometimes the stories are not captured in the raw data itself, but from the discussions that emerged from the assessment.

Table 1: Governance Results 1.1-1.8

Sub region	CSO Partner Thematic area	Country
MICRONESIA	Gender	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	entity	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Youth	FSM
MELANESIA	National Umbrella	SOLOMON ISLANDS
MICRONESIA	National Umbrella	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Climate Action	KIRIBATI
POLYNESIA	Human Rights	TONGA
MICRONESIA	Gender Economic Justice	KIRIBATI
MELANESIA	Development Social Justice	FIJI
MELANESIA	Peacebuilding	FIJI
REGIONAL	Climate Action	FIJI
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI
MICRONESIA	Radiation Atomic Advocacy	RMI
MELANESIA	Gender Identity	FIJI
MELANESIA	Climate Action	SOLOMON ISLANDS
MELANESIA	National Indigenous Women Social Justice and Economic Justice	FIJI
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	SAMOA
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	TUVALU
POLYNESIA	Gender Identity	TONGA
POLYNESIA	Christian Churches	TONGA
MELANESIA	Social and Economic Justice Proxy Umbrella	VANUATU
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI
All Across	Average Indicator	

1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	subtotal	av
1	2.5	1.5	3.5	1.5	0.5	1	1.5	13	41%
1.5	2.5	1.5	1.5	2.2	1.5	2.5	2.5	15.7	49%
3	4	3	2	2	3	3	1	21	66%
3	4	2	3	3	2	2	1	20	63%
3.5	3.5	3	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.9	27.1	85%
2.5	3.5	1.5	3.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	0.5	18.9	59%
1	2	1	1	3	0.5	1	3	12.5	39%
1.5	2.5	1.5	3.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	15	47%
3.5	4	1.2	2.2	3.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	17.7	55%
3.5	3.5	3.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	2.5	1.5	24	75%
2	2	3	2	3	4	3	2	21	66%
2.5	3.5	2.5	3.7	3.7	3.9	2.5	1.9	24.2	76%
2	3	3	2	1	2	2	1	16	50%
2	2.7	2	3.5	3.2	2.2	2.2	1.8	19.6	58%
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8	25%
1	2	2.9	1.1	2	0.5	2.1	0.1	11.7	37%
3	3.9	3.5	1.5	2.5	3.8	3.5	3.5	25.2	79%
2	3	1	3	2	2	2	1	16	50%
2	3.3	2.2	3.2	3.2	1.5	1.5	3.2	20.1	63%
3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	28	88%
2.2	2.5	1.8	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.5	3	19.1	60%
2	3.5	0.5	3	0.5	2.2	3.9	1.1	16.7	52%
2.24	3	2.12	2.56	2.45	2.2	2.29	1.8		58%

GOVERNANCE

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE CSO

Average Scores – 2.24 (see Table)

Four Pacific CSOs were at the planting stage. Reasons provided that they were at Stage 1 was because some the CSOs had been in existence for some time, their purpose became unclear due to the lack of sustained capacity. There was general complacency on governance issues, and to some extent, the concentration of the CSO's functions were in the hands of a few individuals.

This lack of clear understanding of the purpose of the organisation comes down to failing to having a proper constitution which were reviewed. Organisation decision makers and stakeholders understood the purpose based on historic work. Failure to have management, staff, members and constituents familiar with the constitution was an issue.

A strategic plan that was developed without any real participatory process, or a lack of plan was an issue. Programme and activity implementation were not aligned to the purpose of the CSO.

On the other hand the CSOs who were clear on their purpose showed that there were regular board and management meetings. Programme and financial reports were consolidated and presented to informed board members. Finance and HR procedures were adhered to and the organisation had a clear strategic plan developed in a participatory manner that included board members and staff, healthy working partnerships and relationships. Reporting schedules with the donors and funders were maintained on schedules.

The OCAT assessment allowed the struggling CSOs to consider revisiting their constitution, undertaking a review of their strategic plan and allowed constituents and members to restate their purpose and more importantly to view their role in achieving their organisational purpose.

1.1.1 Interconnected crosscutting contributing factors

The other contributing factors to the lack of clear understanding of the purpose of the organisation had to do with issues such a lack of a clear communication plan as well as poor and irregular reporting of activities. This included the reporting on the state of finance, and failure to provide annual external financial audits of accounts. This meant that the Annual General Meeting were irregular, elections were not done as required under the Organisation's constitution, and the management and board were functioning under the direction of the strongest and loudest voice of an individual within the organisation, supported by his or her set of supporters in the organisation. Decision-making on the choice of activities, partnerships they entered into and resource allocation were determined under the whim of the individual. Policy issues for influencing, organisational and management processes were bypassed and members were made to become spectators to an organisation that was operating but with an unclear purpose.

One CSO organisation had an unresolved human resource issue, where both the appointment and dismissal of a senior personnel remained a point of contention that eroded trust between the senior board members and senior management. Because it remained unresolved, members who were uncomfortable with the action remained distant, disillusioned and disengaged. Over time they were not fully involved in decision-making and in shaping the organisation purpose. Questions on the purpose of the organisation arose.

1.2 REGISTRATION

Average score – 3

Legal registration is important to covey the legal status to the organisation. Three CSOs were at the seedling stage (Stage 2) as they were in the process of registration according to the legal framework in the country. In that

regard, one CSO was contemplating in which country to register as that CSO had concerns about the political landscape of the country they were working in. Four CSOs hedged between planting (Stage 1) and seedling (Stage 2). For instance, one CSO had recently become registered in a Micronesian country. Seven Pacific CSOs ranked between maturing (Stage 3) and harvesting (Stage 4). The 7 CSOs had registered but did not consistently comply with reporting requirements. Two other CSOs were registered and consistently complied with reporting requirements. However, for 3 CSOs who were not registered, they regularly communicated with their key stakeholders on their activities, and financial status. This was attributed to the activism of its volunteers

Only one Pacific CSO had recently completed its registration at the time of this Report. Two CSOs straddled between planting and seedling as these CSOs had a constitution which articulated the CSO's purpose, its management, Board composition and governance process. However, their officials had limited awareness of these key documents. Six CSOs had reached the maturing stage in that they had a constitution and its Board, management and members had become conversant with its purpose. This was due to regular socializing about it to all levels of the CSO. CSOs that are moving between planting to harvesting would be the ones who are aware of their governance frameworks and that members and leaders are operating in compliance with these key frameworks. The reverse is reflected in the struggles of CSOs between seedling and planting phase where they are not aware of or are not working in compliance to their founding rules.

Generally, most of the CSOs were cognizant of the value of registration. This was a priority for them as it was also a requirement for operating organisation bank accounts and access to donor funding, who in nearly all instances required registration as a steadfast mandatory requirement.

1.2.1 Legislation and Registration Compliances

It is recognized that general compliance to the requirements of the Statutes can be problematic not just from the CSO perspective but also through regulatory mechanisms. It is crucial that CSOs work towards legislative compliance as part of the broader umbrella of good governance.

CSO legislation in some of the countries also allow a CSO member to be part of working groups and commissions that required community and citizen stakeholder representation and participation. In several of the countries, this also meant that funding allocation for CSOs would be through preferred CSO partners. For example, this were for disaster response and resilience, gender and economic justice, climate change and scholarships. The Ministry of Economy or Finance were the ministry's arm that worked with the CSOs. Requirements included to be registered, provide the standard organisational and financial governance documentation that included a constitution, external financial audit reports and annual reports of programme and finance.

Failure to comply would mean the CSO were non-compliant, and could face deregistration. There was some level of tolerance until the CSO operated contrary to the government political position on an issue and was vocal about the issue. The government would hold them "accountable on compliance issues". This was evident in at least 4 countries. For Fiji, there is no CSO registration legislation, however, CSOs and NGOs register under the Charitable Trust Act or as Not for Profit Limited Liability Companies. A legislation that holds a Board accountable for poor management decisions and serious fiduciary lapses strengthens the role of the Board and urges them to comply and behave within the principles of good Governance. In the Solomon Islands, CSOs register under the Cooperative Societies Act (1953) or the Charitable Acts (1964). The ADB civil societies report per country in the Pacific covers this section well.

1.3 GOVERNING BODY

Average Score – 2.12

Seven CSOs are at the planting stage and this can be attributed to for example, to no or irregular Board meetings due to a spectrum of reasons. This included the following reasons- there was no Board, a lack of commitment of existing board members as well as financial constraints of the CSO.

Four CSOs fell into the seedling stage as its respective Boards only met when important decisions needed to be made. Five CSOs were considered to be at the maturing stage as their Board members were clear on their roles and had functioned according to their roles in oversight management, such as a specific Board member was assigned to be the Treasurer of the CSO. This maturing stage was further reinforced by the regular Board meetings of these Pacific CSOs. To achieve the desired standard of Governance, it is critical for CSOs to have clear processes of appointment of Board members and grounds for termination. This complies with their mandates in providing the necessary oversight in the running of the organisation.

A significant deterrent to convening the Board meetings were the fact that most constitutions required financial and programme reports to be presented at the Board level meetings. Secondly, Annual General Meetings (AGM), which were the critical organisation meetings that bring Board, management and the constituency together required that external audited accounts, financial and programme reports and at the same time have Board elections. These meetings failed to occur because there were no proper external audit reports to be presented and programme reports were flimsy. Because AGMs did not occur, Board members stayed in positions longer than permitted under their constitution.

It is therefore interesting to note that under the OCAT, the older seemingly established CSOs with a longer history of work, have their members assessing themselves at planting or seedling stages. It challenges the assumption that the older CSOs who have been around longer should naturally have stronger Governance frameworks and should naturally and logically be more or less at harvesting or mature stages.

Other indications of a resilient CSO with a robust Governance structure is its ability to maintain partnerships, and sustain them for a period of time. This may include entering into formal MoUs with significant stakeholders and partners like government departments and ministries. Another indication is its ability to manage reputational risks especially if the organisation has just experienced adverse publicity through poor leadership decisions.

Poor leadership as noted from the OCAT discussions manifests itself in many forms. An organisation that fails to hold leadership and management accountable is not as easy concern that can be resolved as a matter of procedure.

Poor leadership as highlighted from the CSO partners include:

- Apathy and inability to make good and sound decisions. Hands were often tied, conflicts of interest issues muddled and unhealthy relationship dynamics were the undercurrents at play. Board members were also project and activity leaders and had committed the activity to their own personal constituencies. Stalling, delays, avoidance, diversion and absenteeism were the common options. In some cases, these leaders were put in that position by the playmaker or kingmaker within the organisation. The position holder will always make decisions that were aligned to the playmaker.
- Bullies and dictators also prevailed in the CSO spaces. Individuals with the loudest voice strongest opinion, who formed cliques and whose mode of operandi was hostility, public humiliation and were master players of the Machiavellian vein. All influencing decisions, all management calls, spending and all key

meeting spaces were orchestrated and controlled by this individual. Agenda were established to drive the discussion and strategy in their favour and to their direction.

- The technocrat is the new graduate who is efficient, trained and skilled in areas of management and communication. They are high flyers who will take the organisation forward, making good changes and engaging intelligently. Unfortunately, they will also become highly attractive and poached by better funded international NGOs, government and even funders and development partners.
- The superstars and personalities are usually the individuals who are the poster child of the Organisation. They have charisma and presence in the programme and organisation events. The highflyer will need to have a strong support team to keep the organisation grounded. They do attract funding and attention. However, they find it difficult to manage the books, the office and the team in the Organisations efficiently.

In summary, poor or strong leadership has a direct impact on the efficiency of a CSOs governing body. Leadership that keeps the house in order allows it to thrive and achieve results.

1.4 CONSTITUENCY OF THE CSO

Average Score – 2.56

Five CSOs were at the planting stage and another 6 CSOs were at the seedling stage compared. Eleven CSOs were at the maturing stage. Those who were at the planting stage were at the early stages of being legally recognized entities. For the CSOs at the seedling stage, the CSOs were considered as recipients of the CSOs services. Their Boards were clear and in agreement on who their constituents are, and how best to address their concerns within the guidelines of the constitution.

For CSOs who were at the maturing stage, Boards had a good understanding of its constituents. Consultations with constituents were done on a peripheral level, particularly in the implementation of a CSO's programmatic activities. For some CSOs, their constituents were particularly engaged on governance issues at their Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting in line with their respective constitutions.

The discussion on constituency is an interesting one and the value of the relationship is based on their real, active and relevant contribution to the area of work. Roles between the thematic lead, their Community Based Organisation constituency, umbrella organisation and their national thematic leads needed demarcation. This emerged in the discussion between the umbrella NGO and the thematic leads in Kiribati. It has been an ongoing discussion and a former manager had developed a concept that redefined the role of the umbrella organisation to predominantly work as the secretariat liaising between state and the thematic leads. This provided a framework of consultation that allowed issues from the local community level to be raised at the national level.

Many of the national thematic leads viewed the umbrella Organisations as competitors encroaching in their space. This is especially so when the umbrella organisations were engaged directly in service delivery in thematic areas.

However, thematic leads were only as relevant and active if the Community Based Organisations were contributing to work in community education, health, women's health and small business efforts, through seed funding, provision of logistics support like transport and ongoing training and skills building.

At the regional level, the national partners were either umbrella Organisations or thematic leads. Most of the regional Organisations are Suva (Fiji based), coordinating efforts in capacity building, strategic planning, on-going monitoring, research and advocacy, as well as influencing in regional and global events. Distance, breakdown in relationships and poor communication plans leave a lot of the good work lost in translation.

The regional Organisations themselves face the same governance and financial and resourcing challenges and therefore are not able to coordinate real collective efforts. The influencing events are often seen by their national counterparts as Suva-driven, their participation consolidated as a collective Pacific voice, when in fact many are bystanders to the decision. However, the national thematic leads and communities in the islands have benefitted in having their stories told through the regional Organisations and globally. These stories in these spaces often result in national policy changes; forcing the hand of their governments to address community specific challenges. This has been evident in the area of Climate Action.

The OCAT influencing discussion has provided the opportunity to understand the value of partnerships and alliances, view the regional influencing framework from the basic community to the global space, and changing the understanding of constituency.

1.5 CSO GOALS AND STRATEGY

Average score – 2.45

Four CSOs were at the planting stage, 7 CSOs were at the seedling stage, ten CSOs were at the maturing stage.

CSOs at the planting stage did not have a Strategic Plan to provide guidance on specific goals, activities and time frames in which the CSO must achieve its goal. The other explanation was the Board had chosen to operate informally, were not registered, and reliant on volunteers to function as CSOs.

Ten CSOs had reached the maturing stage. These CSOs had a Strategic Plan which was implemented steadily or revised in light of the adverse impacts of the global pandemic. Others had an expired Strategic Plan which they were currently revising or seeking Board approval to revise. However, when the CSOs are not adequately resourced to implement the strategy, policies and guidelines may be non-existent, or not complied by the leadership.

In nearly all cases, the development of strategic plans were created by an external consultant with information derived from key informant interviews. There was no participatory process of capturing reflections of previous plans, problem analysis, nor the development of a theory of change to engage constituents. Members were not consulted or provided the opportunity to comment on the plan. Instead it was relayed as a management deliverable rather than a collective collaborative plan owned by constituents. The plans were mostly seen as a compliance deliverables required by donors, funders and government.

Another important element that worked against a clear articulation of the goals and strategies were that these were not developed within the framework of programme and project cycle. Most of the managers were not trained as programme and project managers. They may have purpose but were in most cases guided by a donor or development partner via the consultant in the development of funding proposals and programme design.

On the other hand, the newer CSOs who received significant development partner guidance from inception had all the right elements in place and were very clear on their goals and strategies. They also had a smaller manageable constituency and project team as well as more management capacity support and training. The older CSOs found that the senior management and organisation leads were clear on goal and strategy as they themselves were part of the organisation history, but we found their members and constituents were partially knowledgeable.

1.6 PROCESS OF MEMBERSHIP OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Average Score 2.2

Five CSOs were at the planting stage while 3 CSOs were below par, more so at the planting stage. Seven CSOs were at the seedling stage compared to 6 CSOs who were at the maturing stage. No CSOs had reached the harvesting stage. It was evident that the 3 CSOs who fell short of the planting stage became stagnant as its Board members did not have the necessary skill set and capacity to strengthen the governance of its CSOs. Those CSOs who were at the planting stage was at that stage for a mixed bag of reasons. One CSO had been operating as a collective, with recent formal recognition, some CSO Board members recognized the reasons they were appointed and what they brought to the CSO Board. For some CSOs at the maturing stage, there had been no election in the last 5 years. This gave some continuity to the leadership of the organisation. However, this can be problematic where Boards can operate on familiarity versus clear guidelines or process.

Membership of Governance structure was difficult for members to navigate especially when you had the full constituency, management and Board members in the room. Members had to grapple with the elephant and it was awkward initially, until everyone was constantly reminded that it was a space and where the ground rules for discussion was clear and agreed upon which included allowing everyone to speak and to listen respectfully.

The process of membership and governance structure was fraught with many challenges. These included issues of Boards not changing regularly, or the chair was in the same position for too long. The processes for an effective and functioning Board required that AGMs and regular Board meetings should be convened, that management kept programme and financial reports, communication and rules of designation between management and Board was clear and demarcated. This led to a puppet manager. Strategic plans existed but barely reflected the ever changing activities with the constitution disregarded.

The reason why the constitution is very strong on the process of membership and the governance structure is to avoid leadership that cannot be held accountable by its members. A measure of good Governance is for an empowered membership to hold leadership and management accountable, calling for transparent management practices. The Case Studies section (Section 8) allows us to deep dive into leadership issues with Pacific CSOs and look at some of the positive learnings from the OCAT experience.

1.7 BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Average Score – 2.29

Six CSOs were at the planting stage, ten CSOs at the seedling stage, while 6 CSOs were at the maturing stage. However, one CSO was very close to the maturing stage.

For those CSOs at the planting stage, their limitation was a lack of or no documentation about the deliberations of their Boards. CSOs who were at the seedling stage held ad hoc Board meeting and documentation. In contrast to those CSOs at the maturing stage, their Boards had regular Board meetings, where their deliberations were documented. The minutes was available on demand.

The constant tension between Board, management and the broader members can be a healthy one. It is these tensions of holding each other accountable that allows a CSO to function effectively. There are some good experiences drawn from the OCAT members where management can manage Boards by guiding decisions, by directing to points of reference and also to remind them to work within the brief of their constitution.

The unhealthy scenario occurs when the Board and especially individuals within the Board deviated from good practice, committing the full Board to support say the appointment or dismissal of a staff, or procured goods or services without proper process; or in some cases failing to hold management accountable for bad management decisions. That usually paralyses the Board to continue to behave with accountability and transparency.

In Fiji's case, new legislation for Boards and Companies hold Boards accountable for management decisions and this enforces board accountable and transparency

1.8 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ORGANISATION

Average Score – 1.8

Ten CSOs were at the planting stage while 2 CSOs were labelled as below par. Two other CSOs were at the seedling stage while 5 CSOs were at the maturing stage. Those CSOs at the seedling stage recognized the importance of sustained financial funding but obtained it on an ad hoc basis, rather than one-off donor sponsored events and also had core programmatic funding. These CSOs were developing a diversified funding sources strategy. Finance sustainability remains a constant challenge for most Pacific CSOs. However, it has not stopped them from operating and existing. In most instances, a cash-strapped CSO will revert to voluntarism with key positions funded by disparate and random projects and activities.

A lack of funding and sustainable funding frameworks is a contributor to many of the organisational challenges which include poor Governance Board and management decision making.

For thematic national CSO leads and umbrella CSOs, the logistics costs of meeting the governance compliances include Board meetings, AGMs, audits, development of a proper participatory strategic plan, maintaining a core organisational team and staff that consists of CEO or Executive Director, Finance and HR manager, Programme manager, and communications officer as a standard team. National thematic leads have provincial representation from the outer islands or geographically scattered provinces and this can be a logistical and financial challenge.

Much of what is described in the latter paragraph is considered core costs. Donors and development partners expect the CSO to cover those costs themselves. Even if they were funded under the programme or project cost, the contribution to it is minimal and barely sustainable. CSO's resort to sharing project costs from multi-funded projects to cover core costs.

Many of the CSO's will note their financial commitment per programme have proper recording and tracking accounting software with budget items and number tagged against each funder. The funds are all placed within the one account where all payment is from. This inadvertently means that when tranches are slow because of reporting delays and reimbursement compliances, the CSO will draw from other programme funds with the intention of covering when the tranche comes through.

At a very basic and crudest level, many of the CSO do not have multi donors nor the management capacity and proper procurement processes to maintain good financial systems. Therefore their accounts are not reconciled at best and not externally audited at worst. This is detrimental to their future funding searches as the first financial governance donor assessment is an audited account.

Table 2: Organisational Structure and Management Assessment Results

Sub region	CSO Partner	Country
MICRONESIA	Gender	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Gender Identity	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Youth	FSM
MELANESIA	National Umbrella	SOLOMON ISLANDS
MICRONESIA	National Umbrella	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Climate Action	KIRIBATI
POLYNESIA	Human Rights	TONGA
MICRONESIA	Gender Economic Justice	KIRIBATI
MELANESIA	Development Social Justice	FIJI
MELANESIA	Peacebuilding	FIJI
REGIONAL	Climate Action	FIJI
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI
MICRONESIA	Radiation Atomic Advocacy	RMI
MELANESIA	Gender Identity	FIJI
MELANESIA	Climate Action	SOLOMON ISLANDS
MELANESIA	National Indigenous Women Social Justice and Economic Justice	FIJI
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	SAMOA
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	TUVALU
POLYNESIA	Gender Identity	TONGA
POLYNESIA	Christian Churches	TONGA
MELANESIA	Social and Economic Justice Proxy Umbrella	VANUATU
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI
All Across	Average	

2.1	2.2	2.3	subtotal	av
1.5	1.5	0.5	3.5	29%
1.5	0.5	0.5	2.5	21%
3	1	1	5	42%
1	2	2	5	42%
3	2	1.5	6.5	54%
2.5	2	0.5	5	42%
3.1	2.9	3	9	75%
0.5	0.5	0.5	1.5	13%
3.9	3.9	2.2	10	83%
3.5	3.5	3.5	10.5	88%
1	1	1	3	25%
2.5	2.5	0.5	5.5	46%
3	1	2	6	50%
2.3	2	2.5	6.8	57%
1	1	1	3	25%
2.9	0.1	1.5	4.5	38%
3.2	3.2	3	9.4	78%
2	2	1	5	42%
1.5	1.5	1.5	4.5	38%
3.1	2.9	3	9	75%
3	2	1	6	50%
1.5	1.5	2.2	5.2	43%
2.3	1.84	1.61		48%

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Average Score – 2.3

Five CSOs were at the planting stage, with one CSO performing below par. Five CSOs were at the seedling stage while 9 CSOs that were at the maturing stage. No CSO had reached the harvesting stage.

The CSO that performed below par, had an organisational structure on paper. However in reality it was none existent. Those CSOs that were at the planting stage had skeleton staff running the CSO, for example, it had 2 staff members – usually one fulltime person who worked as the head of the CSO. The person who handled the finance and administration was either working as a volunteer or in a part-time capacity. These 2 officials were in charge of implementing programmatic activities as well as ensuring governance policies were practiced. In some CSOs especially in the Micronesian region, the head of the CSO were volunteers.

Those CSOs that were at the seedling stage had an organisational structure on paper. However staff were unclear as to what the structure was. In some cases, there appeared to be overlapping of roles which had not been effectively addressed by management. In as far as CSOs that had reached maturing stage, their organisational structure and the accompanying accountabilities was well documented and available for public consumption.

In most instances the CSOs had clear notions of the organisation structure, particularly at the management and Board level and less so at the members and constituencies. A poor communications plan and irregular Board meetings meant the structures and processes became pretty much blurred spaces.

With a Board Chair who was always intervening in management decisions and when programme implementation was a common occurrence, project team members were not clear as to whom to report to as the CEO and the Board Chair roles were unclear. This can even be increasingly confusing if the bullish and charismatic Board chair is represented in other partner CSOs as a Board member.

2.2 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Average Score – 1.84

Seven CSOs were at the planting stage while 9 CSOs were at the seedling stage. Three CSOs were at the maturing stage. Three CSOs scored below par, that is, they were unable to reach the planting stage.

Seven CSOs were at the planting stage as they had recently registered and were still working towards creating CSO policies and procedures. Some CSOs had no policies or procedures as they did not recognize the value of these policies and procedures.

Those CSOs at the seedling stage did not have a comprehensive package of policies and there was no mechanism in place for staff to be oriented using these policies. In as far as CSOs that were not at the maturing stage, there were policies and procedures but there were still being situated in the ways that the CSOs worked or scenarios had not arisen to trigger the use of these policies and procedures.

Board and influential elements in the Board dictated the decisions and processes for appointments as policies and procedures especially for finance and HR were not in use. With procurement and payment approvals, procurement of services and goods processes were random. It was therefore difficult for the organisation to undertake external audit as these management lapses were easily identifiable. For the more mature CSOs, the processes for developing influencing policies were not clear and these again were dictated by individuals who had the loudest voice.

2.3 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

Average Score 1.61

Five CSOs performed below par, 8 CSOs were at the planting stage, and 5 CSOs were at the seedling stage and 4 CSOs were at the maturing stage. No CSO had reached the harvesting stage.

CSOs that were at the planting stage had not conducted an organisational review for some time or had not had implemented the recommendations arising out of the organisational review. CSOs at the maturing stage had undertaken organisational reviews internally and therefore lacked independence.

Organisational review is a relatively foreign process and exercise for most Pacific CSOs.

Most CSOs do not undertake reviews unless required by and funded by a donor. In some instances, some of the national governments will engage with the CSO as programme partners or funding recipients if the CSO had undertaken an organisational review. In one country through the OCAT assessment, the OCDP and the PWA were presented to the government department responsible for CSO registration. The department accepted the OCAT as a valid exercise of an organisational review.

When there is no mandated process for CSO review or assessment by a regulating authority, the CSO themselves will undertake perception surveys and organisation reviews; drawing from perception of the organisational health and from a selection of key stakeholders and partners.

Table 3: Finances Self Assessments results

Sub region	CSO Partner	Country
MICRONESIA	Gender	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Gender Identity	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Youth	FSM
MELANESIA	National Umbrella	SOLOMON ISLANDS
MICRONESIA	National Umbrella	KIRIBATI
MICRONESIA	Climate Action	KIRIBATI
POLYNESIA	Human Rights	TONGA
MICRONESIA	Gender Economic Justice	KIRIBATI
MELANESIA	Development Social Justice	FIJI
MELANESIA	Peacebuilding	FIJI
REGIONAL	Climate Action	FIJI
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI
MICRONESIA	Radiation Atomic Advocacy	RMI
MELANESIA	Gender Identity	FIJI
MELANESIA	Climate Action	SOLOMON ISLANDS
MELANESIA	Women Social/ Economic Justice	FIJI
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	SAMOA
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	TUVALU
POLYNESIA	Gender Identity	TONGA
POLYNESIA	Christian Churches	TONGA
MELANESIA	Social and Economic Justice Proxy Umbrella	VANUATU
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI
Average		

4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.10	4.11	subtotal	av
2	0.5	2	1	1.5	0.9	0.5	1.1	2.5	2.5	0.5	15	34%
3.5	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	35.5	81%
2	0.5	2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	8.5	19%
1.5	1.5	2.5	2.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	12.5	28%
3.4	3.4	3.9	3.4	3.4	2.7	3.9	3.4	3.4	3.7	3.7	38.3	87%
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	25%
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	25%
2.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	1.5	2.5	1.3	2.3	3.3	2.5	2.5	26.9	61%
2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	18	41%
3.5	2.5	3.1	3.8	3.8	3.5	2.5	1.5	3.5	3.5	2.5	33.7	77%
3	1	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17	39%
3.5	1	3	3	2.4	3.2	3	1.3	3.1	1.2	1.8	26.5	60%
2.9	2.7	3.8	2	2.5	3.9	1.5	3	2.8	3.9	3.7	32.7	74%
3	3	3	0.5	0.5	2	1	2	2	2.5	1.5	21	48%
3.5	2.5	2.5	1.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	1.5	28.5	65%
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11	25%
3.5	1	3	3	2.4	3.2	3	1.3	3.1	1.2	1.8	26.5	60%
3	2	3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	3.2	3.5	2.2	24.3	55%
0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	5.5	13%
1	1	1	1	3	4	3	2	3	1	1	21	48%
1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	0.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	15.5	35%
3.2	3.9	2.9	2.5	2	2.5	2.2	3.9	3	3.5	0.5	30.1	68%
2.36	1.8	2.3	1.87	1.8	2	1.77	1.67	2.22	2	1.58		49%

FINANCES

For this OCAT Governance area, there were eleven quantitative indicators. It covers areas that define financial governance and is considered the standard for management processes under audit checks.

4.1 RECORD KEEPING

Average score 2.36

Six CSOs were at the planting stage, 5 CSOs at the seedling stage and ten CSOs were at the maturing stage. One CSO was close to reaching the harvesting stage.

CSOs at the planting stage were either at the early stages of establishment of their CSOs and had started keeping records of financial transactions, or the CSO simply had not put in place a system of keeping records or they were in the process of developing a financial policy which would address this quantitative indicator.

CSOs who were at the seedling stage- transactions were recorded in a cashbook particularly for CSOs that were run primarily by volunteers. This was further compounded in some instances by the lack of supporting acquittals such as vouchers or receipts.

For CSOs who were at the maturing stage, all transactions were recorded accurately and promptly. Some CSOs were using a computer software programme like MYOB to record financial transactions as mandated by their financial policy.

Across the older and more established CSOs, there was a strong indication of record keeping. They were also working in an accounting software that required data inputting, with a voucher process that showed approval by the relevant managers and officers.

The newer CSOs whose funding sources were random and inconsistent had erratic financial record keeping. They did not have a designated finance officer or manager to work on bank account reconciliations, or finance policies or manuals.

4.2 FINANCIAL AND CASH MANAGEMENT

Average score – 1.8

In respect of this quantitative indicator, 9 CSOs were at the planting stage, 6 CSOs at the seedling stage while 4 CSOs were at the maturing stage.

Nine CSOs that were at the planting stage did not have or were in the process of developing a financial policy. Three CSOs had scores that were below par. Since registration of the CSOs, they have not developed a financial policy, nor a cash management system. The 4 CSOs who had achieved maturing stage had finance policies which served their day-to-day operations in an open and transparent manner.

Financial policies and manual that guided financial processes were lacking in many of the CSO partners. Reconciliation for simple items like petty cash allocation, safe keeping of cash procedures were not in place. Processes were not available for working over-time in projects and accounting for activity expenses, acquittal of project funding templates and guidelines, and sign off designations. These accountable and transparent process allow for management or audit to follow cash transactions.

4.3 BANK ACCOUNT AND CASH BOX

Average Score – 2.3

Six CSOs were at the planting stage, 7 CSOs at the seedling stage while 4 CSOs were at the maturing stage. One CSO was near to the harvesting stage.

Those CSOs at the planting stage did not have a bank account. They were a newly established CSO who were in the process of getting these matters operationalized, that is, in the process of opening a bank account.

CSOs in the maturing stage had a bank account, a petty cash box and held funds in an account. For those who had a bank account/s there were at least 2 signatories, with the Treasurer/Board member being the constant signatory while the other signatory alternated between the Chair of the Board and another Board member.

The newer CSOs who had just mobilized themselves and defended their purpose, needed to establish their organisation. Their second challenge was looking to find a base, meeting the costs to cater for meetings, transport and the assistance to members who in many cases were victims of abuse and discrimination. The challenge to move beyond pooling funds from fundraiser efforts, individual and collective, meant that the next logical move was to establish an organisation bank account and with it the gradual shift to adapting good financial governance practice. This included the management of petty cash and cash boxes.

The funding requirement by donors always set as a first criteria that recipients required a bank account. The older and more established CSOs were compliant in handling bank account and cash box issues. The only challenges were in the abuse of the petty cash, using funds for purposes other than what it was intended for, a lack of an approval and sign off process for the use of the funds; and finally reconciliation for the use of the petty cash. This required that financial processes and financial policies practices

4.4 CASH AND BANK RECONCILIATION

Average Score 1.87

Eight CSOs were at the planting stage, 5 CSOs at the seedling stage and another 5 CSOs were at the maturing stage. There were 3 CSOs close to reaching the planting stage.

Eight CSOs at the planting stage did not recognize the value of conducting regular bank reconciliations. CSOs at the seedling stage worked on cash and bank reconciliation on an irregular basis. There were conflicts as to which official should be charged with holding the cash, and the officer in issuing cash.

For some CSOs at the seedling stage who had a bank account, their officials took screen shots of financial transactions such as withdrawals, deposit slips as well as receipts and regularly verified it against the bank statement on a monthly basis. This is despite the absence of a financial policy and process. For those CSOs at the maturing stage, cash and bank reconciliations were conducted on a regularly basis, that is, on a weekly basis. The finance officer and the holder of the cash box were not the same person.

Bank reconciliation to some degree required finance officers who are at least trained in basic book-keeping, who understand income and expenses, and were able to prepare a record that captured these 2 clearly then reconciled against the bank statement.

In project management, managers and Board have a fair idea of the financial status of the CSO and at a glance allows the decision-makers to understand the financial health of an organisation.

Many finance officers in the CSOs who either worked as volunteers or had random appointment will struggle with basic bank reconciliation reporting, and the importance of presenting accurate bank and cash reconciliation for management decision-making, as well as board monitoring and appraisal.

4.5 CASH FLOW MANAGEMENT

Average Score – 1.8

Eight CSOs were at the planting stage, 5 CSOs were at the seedling stage and 4 CSOs were at the maturing stage. Four CSOs were close to achieving the planting stage.

This was evident in small CSOs who relied on volunteers that they did not have the know-how nor were able to predict the cash flow needs of their CSO. Often their work was a donor funded specific project or a one-off event. CSOs at the maturing stage were able to execute regular cash flow forecasts without much difficulty,

Tracking cash flow, identifying committed funds, projecting and forecasting of cash is important for the manageable period, be it monthly, quarterly, bi-yearly or for annual forecasts. With multi-funded programmes, the cash flow per donor allocation were requirements, allowing the CSO to present the financial reports to the Board, to the donor and to the auditor for external audit purposes. This suited a more mature CSO organisation who have competent financial managers and finance officers; who were able to develop cash flow management processes and policies and develop the reports to capture and project the movement of cash.

4.6 FINANCIAL REPORTING

Average score – 2

Five CSOs were at the planting stage, 5 CSOs were at the seedling stage, 5 CSOs at the maturity stage and only one CSO was at the harvesting stage when it came to financial reporting.

For those CSOs who were at the planting stage, financial reporting was done on an ad hoc basis, often in response to donor commitments. This meant that they did not have an internal reporting mechanism from the management to the Board within the organisation.

Those CSOs at the seedling stage occasionally prepared financial report but this was to meet donor requirements and not organisational financial reporting.

In as far as those CSOs who were at the maturing stage, they prepared reasonably accurate reports on a regular basis. One CSO shared that there was a lack of clarity on the specific donor funded projects and the sources of income for their Organisation.

Financial reporting for members, financial and constituents, board, donors and external auditors required that the reports were clear on income and expenses, the cash at hand and what was in the bank was in line with the projected and forecasted funding for the next financial cycle. If there were procurement of goods and services that was of a certain value and required scrutiny, or any variances in financial activities, explanations for decisions that supported the action had to be in line with financial policies.

A bank account and a record of income and expenses needs to be developed for a basic financial report.

4.7 MANAGEMENT & SHARING OF FINANCIAL REPORTING

Average score – 1.77

Ten CSOs were at the planting stage, 4 CSOs were at the seedling stage while 5 CSOs were at the maturing stage. Three CSOs were close to reaching the planting stage in management and sharing of financial reporting.

Some CSOs were developing a financial policy and system. Other CSOs had no financial policy or failed to overhaul their outdated financial policy. These were classified as being in the planting stage. For those CSOs who were at the seedling stage, both management and Board members received reasonably accurate financial reports in a timely fashion.

For those CSOs who were at the maturing stage, both management and Board members received complete, accurate and timely reports. This was used in its planning including the execution of its programmatic and operational activities in the short and medium term. One observation shared with the mature organisations who have membership or constituency subscription policies were asked during OCAT assessments to request financial reports from their Boards. In 3 large Organisations, the team was informed that these were for donors, Board or audit purposes. Subscribed members were not seen as appropriate recipients of finance reports and this was a point of contention, but never articulated.

Members protested silently by delaying or withholding their subscriptions and at the same time the management and Board assumed that they were deliberately defaulting. This then provided an excuse for the management and Board to make decisions on organisation's strategic programme direction without consulting. However, the management and Board kept their ad hoc members as they needed a constituency to rationalize the coverage of their work to donors.

It is an important element of financial transparency to include all members and stakeholders in viewing and commenting on the financial records.

4.8 BUDGETING

Average score – 1.67

Twelve CSOs were at the planting stage, 5 CSOs were at the seedling stage, ten CSOs were at the maturing stage. Due to the lack of capacity, none or a handful knew how to prepare a budget hence remained at their planting stage. For those CSOs at the seedling stage, specific project budgets or one-off event budgets were prepared but there was no organisational budget. CSOs at the maturing stage prepared both project and organisational budgets.

Budgeting requires the guidance of a finance manager. In most cases, many of the Organisations did not have access to finance managers experienced in managing development and CSO funding portfolios, where they were dealing with multi-funded accounts, had project funding end dates, multiple reporting formats and in some cases under one bank account.

Lack of a strategic plan that outlined the connection of programme implementation, activity costs and preparing budgetary allocation from several sources can be a challenging for a basic corporate trained finance manager. In many instances, corporate trained finance managers came through the traditional accounting and audit route and found CSO financing and funding models complex.

4.9 EXPENSES MANAGEMENT

Average Score – 2.22

Nine CSOs were in the planting stage compared to 4 CSOs in the seedling stage. Nine CSOs were in the maturing stage. For those CSOs at the planting stage, they were at the early stages of being registered as a CSO or their expenditure was determined solely by the cash or funds on hand. Therefore, expenses management was limited.

For those CSOs at the seedling stage, due to financial constraints, very little attention was paid to selecting the appropriateness of a specific programmatic activity and the subsequent expansion of funds. CSOs who were at the maturing stage were able to closely monitor expenditure against budget, be it specific projects or organizationally; and take appropriate action where money was underspent or overspent.

Expense management is prevalent in the CSOs who are more established and have a more complex funding models. This hardly applies with the newer CSOs who have a less complex funding commitments and small funding value.

How and what to spend the funds for is generally clear and simple to determine for most CSOs.

4.10 PROCUREMENT

Average Score – 2

Twelve CSOs were at the planting stage, 3 CSOs were at the seedling stage while 7 CSOs were at the maturing stage.

CSOs at the planting stage had no or minimum procedures for purchasing goods and services. Purchases were often facilitated by a volunteer and or a CSO official. Those CSOs at the seedling stage had some purchasing procedures in operation. These were not practical or were not practiced by management. In as far as CSOs who had reached the maturing stage, they had clear purchasing procedures in place, and this included monetary limits for specific types of goods and services.

Procurement is generally about processes to avoid conflicts of interests and fraudulent procurement practices. Nothing erodes trust and confidence in management more than poor procurement practices. This is generally true and relevant to larger CSOs with complex budget sizes and implementation commitments that translate to goods and services. These generally fall in the category of hiring consultants for services and for goods, equipment, machinery and tools including in some cases vehicles.

4.11 ASSET MANAGEMENT

Average Score – 1.58

Eleven CSOs were at the planting stage, 3 CSOs were at the seedling and another 3 at the maturing stages respectively. Five CSOs were close to achieving the planting stage.

The sixteen CSOs did not have a proper asset Inventory Register which meant that there was no stock control system. This was the case for those CSOs who were run by volunteers or who had faced significant financial and human resource difficulties over many years.

Those CSOs at the seedling stage saw the maintenance of assets being undertaken on a needs basis without proper planning. Worn out items were not easily identifiable within the CSO. For those CSOs at the maturing stage, they had a complete list of assets which was regularly updated. As a result, assets were being maintained or replaced as and when deemed appropriate to do so.

Asset management is again mainly common to more mature and well established CSOs as they would have accumulated capital assets in the form of equipment, buildings over a few funded projects and programmes. The donor requirements would have required some form of asset management framework and recording. External audits would have required assets to be recorded and their value accounted for even when it was depreciated. This would require an organisation with a finance manager familiar with asset management requirements and processes for audit and financial reporting.

It is also a tricky issue as many office equipment like laptops, cameras and phones can transition into personal ownership by managers. Asset management may not be a priority to avoid accounting for items that have transitioned into private ownership.

Table 4: Collaborations and Alliances Assessments Results

Sub region	CSO Partner	Country	5.1	average
MICRONESIA	Gender	KIRIBATI	1	25%
MICRONESIA	Gender Identity	KIRIBATI	3.5	88%
MICRONESIA	Youth	FSM	1.5	38%
MELANESIA	National Umbrella	SOLOMON ISLANDS	2	50%
MICRONESIA	National Umbrella	KIRIBATI	2.9	73%
MICRONESIA	Climate Action	KIRIBATI	3	75%
POLYNESIA	Human Rights	TONGA	1	25%
MICRONESIA	Gender Economic Justice	KIRIBATI	2.5	63%
MELANESIA	Development Social Justice	FIJI	3	75%
MELANESIA	Peacebuilding	FIJI	2.5	63%
REGIONAL	Climate Action	FIJI		0%
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI	3	75%
MICRONESIA	Radiation Atomic Advocacy	RMI	2.5	63%
MELANESIA	Gender Identity	FIJI	3.5	88%
MELANESIA	Climate Action	SOLOMON ISLANDS	1.5	38%
MELANESIA	National Indigenous Women Social Justice and Economic Justice	FIJI	1.1	28%
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	SAMOA	3	75%
POLYNESIA	National Umbrella	TUVALU	3.2	80%
POLYNESIA	Gender Identity	TONGA	1.5	38%
POLYNESIA	Christian Churches	TONGA	3	75%
MELANESIA	Social and Economic Justice Proxy Umbrella	VANUATU	3.5	88%
MELANESIA	Gender Economic Justice	FIJI	2	50%

COLLABORATION AND INFLUENCING

5.1 ALLIANCES

Average score 2.3

Six CSOs were at the planting and seedling stages respectively while 8 CSOs were at the maturing stage.

Overall, Pacific CSOs place significant value on working relationships with other CSOs as a key ingredient in ensuring that they were able to implement their programmatic activities and fulfill their constitutional mandate. However, this can be problematic when some CSO prefer to work in silos due to political, cultural and various dynamics that influence their decisions in collaborating and partnership. Some national umbrella CSOs particularly in all sub-regions were unable to sustain support with some partners and donors. This was due to the fact that they did not have proper or existing structures that would meet the donor requirements for

funding purposes. It is important to note that CSOs found value in forming strategic alliances with regional and international CSOs on shared interests and were able to leverage these alliances to build programme implementation, support and networking. Despite the overall governance challenges within the CSOs, the more seasoned Pacific CSOs appeared to have leveraged their history, traditional ties and wider links and networks in the community. Their iconic figures in the Board to some extent played a role in facilitating their engagement with other CSOs and international partners while also forming strategic partnerships with governments and donors.

OCAT - TRENDS AND CONCLUSIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL AND FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE DRAWN FROM THE OCA RESULTS

The broad governance challenges facing CSOs can be distilled into these areas-

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Finance was a weak area for most of the CSO partners and this was demonstrated in the scores. The lack of record keeping, failure to have sound financial policies and procedures, cash flow management, budgeting, reporting, sharing of reports, asset management pointed to 4 important issues:

1. Financial governance obligations were not clarified constitutionally
2. Policies and guidelines were insufficient
3. A lack of Human Resource capacity
4. An existing pattern of financial behavior has existed that allowed the organisation to address its financial management

All of the above were drawn out in the OCAT sessions across the Pacific and presented themselves in many different forms. These were highlighted in the explanatory paragraphs for the 4 OCAT areas above.

Most national and community based CSOs struggle with financial accountability for various reasons. The size of the CSO influenced its financial behaviour, particularly where 1 or 2 paid staff were responsible for the operations of the Organisation. Weak management will find influential Board members bullying management into making decisions that deviated from proper procedures. Management found it difficult to present a financial account for audit as they had poor record keeping, have financial and procurement decisions they preferred to remain obscure or ambiguous. It could be due to the fact that the sign off process was improper, or some of functioning members may have presented some form of financial report but not an externally audited financial report.

Financial reports were also not shared widely to all members, but restricted only to Board and management. Some prepared financial

reports that were incomplete and remained an annual and ongoing issue.

The failure of owning or having proper financial policies and procedures, and manuals that guide financial governance was a significant issue. The OCDP in many of the Organisations identified the development of a financial manual as a deliverable.

The appointment of well-trained finance officers and managers who were familiar with CSO Finances. who could present reports, develop proper policies and procedures, set up tender processes and contracts for procurement, develop cash flow management and proper cash flow forecasts was an important issue. Many CSOs appointed finance officers and identified that they undertook accounting software training (e.g. in MYOB) to establish record keeping and reporting elements of finance.

A few had vouchers and sign off forms for all payments, while many made payments on instructions and directives by either email or verbally and trusted the bank statement to reflect the payment decisions.

When it came to financial accountability, it is important to note that the performance of national umbrella CSOs was not as consistent in the sub-regions.

- (a) **Lack of proper procedures** can be attributed to the lack of oversight of the Board and or the inability of the management to properly and effectively control finances as per the CSO's financial policy. It indicates the challenges faced by the management to regularly communicate any financial irregularities to the CSO's board, to immediately remedy financial irregularities, take appropriate actions against the relevant staff member and or upskill staff on financial technicalities and operations as a way to address these financial issues.

- (b) One of the glaring governance oversight that impacted across the other governance areas was the failure to provide external audit reports. This meant that AGMs were not called because the financial reports and audits were not ready. This further meant that the Board remained for another term functioning as an operational organisational but defaulting on its constitutional governance commitments. Constituents and members were frustrated but remained with the organisation as it continued operating and was funding some of the activities and projects albeit without fulfilling proper financial and organisational governance commitments.
- (c) **Organisational capacity issues** can be attributed to the resources available to CSOs. These are focused on specific and short-term donor projects which are anticipated to produce fixed results instead of investing in the capacity of the organisation¹⁷. Core funding is becoming rare and it is usually delivered to Pacific CSOs that are larger and professionalized Organisations based in the urban areas¹⁸;
- (d) Organisational capacity exists, there has to be a political will within the organisation to value the Governance principles and to practice it through the governing and management frameworks. The bigger question in this case is where does the responsibility lie to support the organisation and to strengthen its governance capacity? Is it to be left to be a cash strapped under-resourced CSO or should partners such as national governments and donors contribute to the capacity strengthening commitment? There are enough Governance assessment mechanisms around commercially and within the donor environment that can be utilized.

Organisational development – The unhealthy funding environment will inadvertently lead to CSOs competing for resources from the same sources and donors rather than collaborating to build technical capacity in the 5 governance areas. Human resources in a CSO is devoted to implementation of a specific project and subsequent reporting requirements are both tedious and focused on narrow outputs. Thus leaving little to build the governance technical capacity of the CSO

Organisational development as observed through the OCAT experience is not singular and exclusive in its nature. There is an intersectionality in its relationship. A weak finance system points to a weak organisational and management structure, with weak stipulations within the governance document, namely the constitution. Once areas of attrition is identified, it is important to chart a way forward to address the weak areas. This will be dependent on the Organisation's access to resources and their political will to change.

The OCA also highlights that it is the donor environment, usually external to the CSO space that brings CSO to come to a head and become territorial in nature.

- (e) **Compliance with regulatory requirements** as set out in the national enabling legislation – failure by both senior management and the Board to ensure regulatory compliance or the Board is not driving and or strongly advocating for regulatory compliance for the reasons outlined in paragraphs (b) and (c).

The CSO Partner's experiences in the various countries reflect the regulatory application or lack of application of the laws that govern CSOs. Some are specific and others nonexistent. Where no laws exist, the registration requirement by donor funders for programme support mandate registration, forcing them to defer to some form of acceptable legal registration that suit their purposes as CSOs. The Organisation's decision to regulate to a certain degree is dependent on the constitutional environment that govern the freedoms and rights of association.

17 See Learning with Small and Medium Sized CSOs – 2019. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5cb8909fed915d74fa61d7c9/538_Learning_with_Small_and_Medium_Sized_CSOs_First_Study.pdf pdfents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/028/03/PDF/G1602803.pdf?OpenElement (accessed 18 See footnote 17

Compliance or its lack of organisational policies/rules and/or the absence of rules including a Constitution can be attributed to a range of issues. This includes a Pacific CSO recently established, the dereliction of governance issues over time (e.g. due for instance to tensions between Board and management) and a lack of human capacity to establish and or implement governance policies.

- (f) Many Organisations often overlook the review of organisational policies. It is as an exercise to test how it fields against the financial and organisational compliances. This does not mean they have not been scrutinized or assessed or appraised in some form or the other. This is usually by donors and by national governments under regulatory laws for registration. The issue is the process is strictly formatted for audit, usually with a management team that has already inherited bad practices or managed by bully managers. The OCA process allows for the organisation to address compliance in a non-threatening approach.

Resourcing - It is notable that many factors contribute to these weak governance structures, but they are largely due to the lack of financial and human resources that is needed to support and build the governance architecture of the CSO. The strength of Pacific homegrown CSOs is the willingness of people or the community to volunteer if they personally believe in the cause of the CSO. This willingness to volunteer is frustrated by the lack of governance architectures. It means that most volunteers would rather be bystanders than actively contribute to building a robust organisation. So, they wait on "management" or the "Board" to sort out the structure and management of the organisation. However, it was apparent that few within the organisation were struggling with the know-how or resources needed to drive the organisation forward.

- (g) **Accessing finance** - The fourth functional capability to gauge the governance architecture of the Organisation is Finance. Many Pacific CSOs struggle in accessing finances or having processes

to manage finances. Almost all CSOs were reliant on donor funding or government support with very little finances available from other sources. This means that CSOs must have a fundraising strategy and the technical capacity to access funding sources, meet donor reporting obligations and robust procurement and acquittal processes. CSOs who have a strong Finance policy and framework to implement, can attract donor funding and support towards their activities. This also means that targeted intervention is needed by CSOs that are struggling in this area. This assistance would put the CSO in a better position to access funding. From this exercise, various issues were identified but a national umbrella CSO from the Micronesian region scored well. They had a solid Financial Policy which had provisions to cover 11 indicators. However, on closer scrutiny, it was revealed that despite the national umbrella CSO having a bank account, processes articulated in the Financial Policy in most instances were not followed. This was complicated further by the organisation being run by both volunteers and Board members who have overlapping roles. This led to problems arising out of not addressing separation of powers and roles which created actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

These governance realities are interdependent nor ranked. It is recommended that they not be considered in isolation to each other. For instance, a CSO’s registration or non-registration under the relevant legislative framework will have an impact on whether the CSO is financially accountable and if the CSO was able to develop and implement governance policies.

These issues are premised on the critical role of Civil Society Organisations in our Pacific democracies. CSOs must adhere to robust good governance processes to ensure that they function at the optimum to remain legitimate voices.

The CSOs were scoring below 50% in the area of financial control, organisational structure and management as well as human resources. CSO must significantly improve 3 governance areas if the CSOs are to perform at the optimum, meet their constitutional mandate and have positive and long-terms impact on their constituents. In the fourth area- Governance, the CSO is clear on who the CSO seeks to benefit and represent; and also provides a mechanism for these beneficiaries to be involved in its decisions. The Rebbilib assessment used by the CSOs to prioritise the governance areas highlighted areas of deficiencies. When these areas are remediated, they will be able to contribute to the strengthening of the governance frameworks of CSOs.

The weak financial accountability indicators reflect a more widespread management dysfunction. Some of these include-

Governance	CSO Partner	Country
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration of the organisation, Membership and retention of Board Members Conduct of meetings of the Board to provide Policy direction or governance oversight. Lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities of Board Members. Clarity on the role of the Board, whether it is management or advisory or a hybrid. Board Accountability and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of awareness of the Organisation structure Lack of consultation and real participation on organisational review processes. No clear structure or organogram so one person can have multiple roles meaning the “ways of working” are often ad-hoc as opposed to established structures. Weak policy implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of human resources policy so recruitment procedures are often unclear. Lack of clear procedures on human resources matters. Lack of clarity on job descriptions and roles. No training or capacity building opportunities available to staff or volunteers. Struggle to retain staff Lack of performance appraisal systems

Most of the 11 indicators for CSOs fell short and was categorised into the seedling stage. CSO staff and Board members needed to build their capacity and the entire CSO needed to be socialized in financial policy, and to ensure it is implemented in a manner consistent with the law and ethics.

Working relationships are based on traditional ties or family networks in the small communities and therefore implementing governance policies within ethical bounds remains a significant challenge for Pacific CSOs. Examples include the inability of a national umbrella CSO to challenge a iconic figure such as a former national leader, failure to declare actual or potential conflicts of interests to an agenda item due to family connections, or the CEO did not declare his or her interest or recuse themselves in a matter which is currently under investigation by external authorities.

A national CSO working on a thematic issue from the Polynesian region did not practice tight financial controls where it was membership driven. The CSO did not have a sound financial policy, it was unable to produce a proper organisational budget, let alone annual project budgets. Indicator 8 of the Finance Governance area requires that ideally both annual project budgets and an annual organisational budget needs to be prepared. There was a need to have a clear guidance provided by the management on the process of development and the stakeholders who must be involved in the budget preparation, vetting and approval. Given that donor funds were given to larger and professional CSOs and that there was lack of internal capacity in most Pacific CSOs, budgeting remains a serious governance issue for most Pacific CSOs.

In relation to organisational structure and management, most CSOs in the Micronesian and Polynesian were operational due to volunteers. This had adverse impacts on the ability of a CSO to create and sustain governance mechanisms and put in practice sound financial policies. The human capacity and the financial resources of a CSO are the key ingredients that enables a CSO's governance policies to be developed and exercised in an ethical manner. As mentioned earlier, the absence of an independent evaluation of the organisational structure and management led to inefficiencies, a lack of accountability in the allocation of responsibilities and clarity of tasks needed to effectively deliver a CSO's mandate.

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE – BUSINESS CHANGE

The Organisation's willingness to proceed to work on identified areas that needed strengthening is critical. It is a requirement of organisational behavioural change. The rules for social science and behavior change applies and therefore other forms of motivation to change come into play. It does not become a simple exercise in bringing about improved efficiency and effectiveness. In the section 8 on Case studies, we will visit shared experiences of organisation behavior on governance.

It is generally the position that some of the system or processes have been working, though they were not perfect. These practices were made by the decision making team and therefore, the question to change this can be a challenge. The behavioural change challenge is a classic business change challenge that is generally universal.

SECTION 7. FACTORS OUTSIDE THE OCAT ASSESSMENT THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE CURRENT STATE OF GOVERNANCE IN CSOS – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The 2009 UNDP 6 country CSO capacity assessment report focused on organisational development, sustainability and resourcing, information sharing, cooperation and advocacy, stakeholder relations and the legal and regulatory environment.¹⁹

In the overview, the report noted that while CSOs were generally happy with their outcomes, they were not satisfied with what they were able to achieve. There were projects they wanted to undertake but were unable

to due to a lack of infrastructure, or funding, which was hindering their plans for expansion, and even obtaining skilled labour and even basic items like office equipment.²⁰

PIANGO as the regional umbrella Organisation has long acknowledged leadership as an area of need for capacity strengthening for CSOs. In an effort to strengthen leadership, they have embarked on the Pacific Development Leadership which states the following on their website:

“PIANGO recognises that leadership is crucial to development effectiveness and that throughout the region there have been many initiatives designed to address this. PIANGO has in the past, taken a lead role in building capacity in CSO and together with UNDP and UNITECH founded a successful Graduate Diploma in NGO Management program. There is a clear role for PIANGO in this work, it is seen as valuable by our members and we have the organisational capacity to govern and direct the work. PIANGO will also seek to conduct a review of capacity building work across the region, what has and has not worked, the challenges and opportunities posed by the current context and some options for going forward. In relation to this, PIANGO will work with PIFS at the regional level and Pacific national governments on social accountability in advocacy of good governance while at the same time develop leadership training and development to target next generation CSO leadership.

There is a sweeping need to strengthen institutions and the next generation of leadership -and this includes Civil Society at large. More effective Civil Society organizations will be in a much improved position to address the developmental challenges of the people throughout the region.”²¹

19 UNDP “A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific – Six Country profile”, 2009

20 UNDP “A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific – Six Country profiles”, 2009 Under header titled “Overview”.

21 <http://www.piango.org/our-focus-areas/pacific-developmental-leadership-post/>

Similarly, the Asia Development Bank have identified the following in their review of CSO states of leadership and governance:

"CSOs in the Pacific region continue to struggle to meet the growing needs and demands of marginalized people (including women and youth) and underserved communities, both in direct services delivery and in the more indirect CSO responsibility of advocacy. Because of their limited size and resource base, most CSOs do their work with minimal training and technical support, and have difficulty attracting and retaining suitably qualified personnel to meet the complex demands on CSOs. The need to provide TA for Pacific CSOs in a wide range of operational and strategic areas has been well documented. In addition to the Pacific strategy, the training needs analysis in 2005 for the ADB Leadership Enhancement and Advancement Program (LEAP) summarized the following priority learning needs of CSOs: (i) policy analysis and issue identification, (ii) advocacy techniques, (iii) engagement with the government and business, (iv) community development, and (v) resource generation and mobilization."²²

On 29 March 2018, the PIFS CSO Diplomacy Strengthened Regional Meeting saw the Director of Governance and Engagement, Mr. Sione Tekiteki state that CSOs as a collective group, whilst representing different concerns to regional dialogues can start engaging with governments and the private sector. This would be under a new kind of CSO diplomacy where the exploration of CSO roles and contributions to national and regional policies are embraced, as relative to what government and private sector is doing. In that meeting, the participants identified the 4 key priority areas namely: (i) Increasing population movements (ii) economic progress (iii) human security and (iv) Governance.

This section looks at the key issues raised in the reports and the discussions that emerged out of the OCA experience. Issues go way back to 2006. It provides a more current state of play and links the very basic concerns floated by the members' reflections of their work in the context of where their Organisations were at.

CSO's capacity strengthening issues outside of the OCA experience were identified in all the reports. The issues remain relatively unchanged: resourcing, governance, effective engagements and influencing roles for national and regional policy, resourcing, leadership, accountability and so forth. The response to address the issues was to provide training, create more dialogue and alignment, provide technical advisory support, and capacity strengthening to the CSOs via the ministry and government counterparts.

22 ABD Technical Assistance Report, Pilot Strengthening of Civil Society Participation in Development in the Pacific, 2006

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the heart and soul of any organisation including a CSO. CSOs that have a strong leader/s will practice a leadership culture which is versatile, innovative and progressive. As a result, the CSO will readily practice various good governance principles including transparency, accountability, and adherence to the rule of law, participation, competence, innovation and openness to change, among others.

Leadership must be viewed at 2 levels: to look at the role of the leader of the CSO, where the person is accountable to the CSO Board and secondly, the role of the CSO Board. The Board is to provide oversight and guidance of the organisation as set out in the CSO's constitution. However, it is important also for the Constitution or legal framework to clarify the types and roles of the Board. There are various governance Board models that exist. The model will determine the oversight role and other functions that the Board ought to play in the management of the CSO. These include

- (i) The Advisory Board Model. The Head of the Organisation will seek advice from the Board, or the Board provides advice to the Head on the management of the organisation. The Constitution ought to provide the binding or persuasive nature of these advice such as a Board Resolution. The Organisation Head implements the advice and exercises discretion in terms of its adoption and/or implementation.
- (ii) The Policy Board Model. The Head of the Organisation runs the organisation and often consults with the Board on policy matters. Most of the powers of the Board are often delegated to the Head of the CSO. At regular meetings, the Head updates the Board on the activities of the CSO.
- (iii) The Cooperative Governance Model. The Board members run the Organisation on a consensus basis. This set up is determined by the legal framework such as the Act that guides the establishment of such CSOs or that the Organisation's Constitution clearly stipulates that the CSO is run by the Board of Directors.

- (iv) The Management Team Model. The Organisation is run by Committees of the Board. For example, the Board can have a Finance Committee that oversees the financial aspects of the CSO, a Human Resource Committee that looks at HR policies and practices
- (v) Mixed or Hybrid Governance Model. The Board is based on any of 4 models (i-iv) and establishes working committees to assist in the management of the CSO

Once the role of the Board and that of the CSO is clear, there will be greater synergies and complementarity to their roles. A CSO leader's personal integrity and ethics, professional background, competence, passion and drive as well as "soft skills" can play a significant role in strengthening good governance of a CSO.

Depending on the legal framework that governs a CSO, the Board is usually the highest authority of an organisation. Therefore, it is imperative that it has members who exercise personal integrity, ethics and competence as the Board must work in close partnership with the CSO leader. These 2 entities will ensure the fulfillment of the vision, mission and goals of the CSO. It is advisable to have Board members who are experienced or qualified in a range of areas such as Governance, organisational reforms, finance, law, management and the thematic areas that the organisation operates under. The executive is also supposed to act as a mechanism to ensure it is not one person's agenda being played out in its decision-making processes.

The CSO leader and Board members will need courage and stamina to see things through. Without it, CSO Boards can stifle and overwhelm a dissenting voice within. In some CSOs, it was people of integrity who chose to leave the CSO or overlook the governance realities rather than 'rock the boat' or demand accountability.

Pacific CSO leadership has favoured the charismatic personality who is also viewed as ordained or called to the role. Through a period or era of protest advocacy, these leaders emerged as the frontline, walk the talk cum preach to the word leaders. They set a pattern of CSO leadership behavior that still translates in today's space.

Unfortunately many transferred that same style of leadership into their CSO environment, leading by fear, resistant to follow procedures and viewed project and programme management processes as measures of control. Development partners were viewed as a necessary evil. This was experienced and observed and such individuals ruled and prevailed in settings that were smaller, highly interconnected, empires for the individual who controlled CSO settings. These leaders formed power cliques and had influences that were far reaching and extensive.

Another form of leadership that was apparent was the founder leader, who in most cases refused to leave, making it their own personal centre of social and political influence. They were dismissive of leadership mentoring and in most cases on their departure left leadership vacuums and organisations that were in poor state of organisational Governance particularly when there was an ineffective Board.

The programme had to navigate around these leadership hurdles and realities with significant caution, allowing the programme intention and integrity to keep its course achieving mixed results.

There were examples of good strong leadership in both the Board and management spheres. The CSO CEO had come in with strong commercial and business administration background. He was able to identify the gaps and needed an activity for an organisational review. The programme standing out as an objective actor with the correct INGO branding offered the OCAT as an intervention. This would require full membership, Board and management engagement in a process that resulted in the correct intervention. This would produce the appropriate Governance assessment report that met the government CSO assessment authority's reporting format. It also allowed the CSO to move in the right direction, addressing the organisational Governance gaps as a priority

CSO BOARD AND ITS COMMITMENT

For one umbrella national CSO in the Polynesian sub region, the CSO leader who recently joined the CSO, carefully negotiated with the Board members to secure their support. This was to put together some proposed constitutional amendments which would provide clarity on the role of the Board viz e viz the management for consideration at its next AGM.

For one nascent organisation, it was evident that participatory and inclusive leadership strengthened interaction between the management and the Board. Prior to the CSO's formal registration, there was an organisational practice that Board members whose terms have come to an end, served as advisors to the Board for a specific time frame. This was done for 2 reasons: sharing and documenting the institutional memory of the CSO and assisting new board members to ease into their roles and responsibilities.

In some cases, the general lack of commitment by Board members to attend or participate in Board meetings or to exercise leadership on crucial matters of the Organisation undermines the Governance of a CSO. In a national umbrella CSO in the Micronesian region, the long-distance travel from a Board member's place of residence to the venue of the Geographical distance was costly. The breakdown in the relationship of the Board and management were factors that influenced how members participated in Board meetings. In another CSO, the Board members refusal to attend meetings unless they were paid a sitting allowance which undermined their commitment to the organisation.

In a particularly effective Melanesian CSO, the Board members were founding members and heads of their pillar organisations themselves. They had strong capacity for mobilisation and a constituency and individual Organisations that were very active and motivated. They recognized the strength and capacity of their consolidated power and this impacted and influenced the CSO's approach to work. They demonstrated this in post cyclone recovery work and later with several surveys, contributing to the design in development and infrastructure work. Governments also

started to recognise their capacity to mobilise, their community reach and created spaces for discussions with them. This was evident in several other scenarios where active Board members were energized and motivated to translating their work ethics into their CSO spaces.

Some management decision-making left single members sidelined from the process, feeling slighted or undervalued. For example, appointments, dismissals and procurement decisions were done without full consultation. These members also began to view the deviation in behavior with some mistrust.

The critical gel to the Board commitment is the underlying values of honesty, respect, trust and collective consensus and egalitarian decision-making. Any deviation will erode trust and individuals will feel disrespected. It points to the importance of the values and the relationship as the important currency that draws members to commit.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CSO

The role and leadership of a CSO Board is often influenced by cultural/traditional considerations and gender which can be impediments to the Governance of the CSO. In some Pacific countries, the most senior Board member or a person with high standing in the community can be the most vocal dissenting voice on the Board. The most senior person of high standing in a community may also be a quiet personality. Cultural mores surrounding the practices and uses of silence can be used to influence decisions in a Board, be it verbalized or ignored through silence.

Other cultural factors that were raised by key informants included:

1. Education – people may downplay lived experience of lifelong education alone and not question the ideas and decisions of the most formally educated people in a Board when in most instances, practical experience that informs decision-making is useful.
2. Religion – Boards that have a religious leader or person of standing in a church may refrain from correcting or querying questionable ideas or decisions.
3. Wealth – not questioning person(s) of wealth in a Board.
4. High standing in the community – people find it difficult to question the ideas and decisions made by people with high standing (traditional and or political spheres) or ranking in the community or at the national level.

It is clear that while these factors can be positive towards the operations of the organisation as they can leverage standings of the Organisation in the community, proper processes will ensure that the Organisations operate with professionalism for the good of the organisation rather than based on personality charisma. Furthermore, there needs to be more clarity for some CSO Boards on whether they are a management Board or an advisory Board. The distinction is crucial and must be clearly spelled out in the founding documents of the organisation to ensure that the Board and Management's roles are clearly articulated, understood and applied by both entities.

In the cultures in the Pacific, cultural expectations shape processes, relationships, communication protocols remains a strong consideration in every facet of work and partnership. It forms the personality of the CSO which often baffles external observers.

The programme found that it was highly beneficial when members of the programme team knew the language, have real connections to the countries from previous work experience and in some cases lived in the countries visited. These experiences allowed the team to read and intuitively interpret the nuances and respond appropriately sensitively acknowledging the cultural elements.

GENDER AND SOCIAL INCLUSION PRACTISE

Gender issues can be problematic when the Board dictates the daily operations of the management/ organisation. This was demonstrated by a head of a CSO who shared that the longest serving person on board would make key decisions despite the presence of a woman who was Board Chair. The CSO leader shared that often gender and the cultural considerations in selected countries influenced the way in which some Board members engaged with a CSO leader. For example, the CSO leader's views and/or suggestions to improve governance practices in the CSO were dismissed without due consideration by the Board simply because of her gender. Given the entrenched patriarchy that exists in most Pacific societies, good Governance dictates that all Board members must follow the processes and not allow gender bias to dictate the response or actions which the Organisation should take. Gender sensitivity training and practices is crucial to good governance.

The new gender CSOs experienced by the RPV programme in 2 countries were the gender identity LGBTQI CSOs as new players who formed strong partnership with women CSOs under the gender theme.

STAFF TURNOVER

Generally, CSOs have experienced relatively high staff turnover due to many factors but primarily due to the absence of core donor funding and lack of a career path in the CSO. Job security and stability as well as the benefits tied to government positions were pull factors that saw CSO employees leave their employment in a CSO or voluntarily exit to join Government.

Staff turnover is also due to nepotism and cronyism. In cases where overt gestures in the recruitment and or promotion of family members (sometimes for succession planning) and friends are the norm, staff turnover is high. It was an interesting observation in several country settings where the CSO staff included several members related to the Board and management members where some who were their children or siblings. It figured

though that in a small island nation setting, it is challenging to set strict parameters on family. If they applied and they were better suited, then it became the logical decision to appoint the person in a country where everyone was connected or related in some form or the other. This does require declarations of conflicts of interest and some process to clarify and provide rationale for the appointment. Furthermore, Organisations that struggle to attract funding, have high turnovers as staff or volunteers look for better opportunities either in the private sector, within government sectors, with INGOs, UN agencies or other NGOs. Moreover, CSOs which are managed or staffed by volunteers, have an added layer of Governance realities and this include a perceived lack of ownership by the CSO in governance matters, lack of commitment in strengthening the Governance and programmatic aspects of the CSO.

The primary role of the Board is to ensure sustainability and continuity, particularly financially and they need to recognize that staff turnover is linked to the sustainability of the organisation.

ABSENCE OF TRAINING AND/OR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The management's prioritisation of the implementation of donor funded programmes/ activities accorded low priority to the regular training and capacity development on Governance issues for the CSO staff and Board members. The lack of training contributes to general complacency about Governance and a lack of ownership in the CSO. Basic governance training is crucial as it will empower the management to strengthen their capacity; to develop and/or carefully implement policies and Governance rules of the organisation.

In some CSOs, while interaction between management and the Board occurred on a yearly basis, it was obvious that the necessary upskilling of Board Members of a CSO needed to occur at regular intervals. Upskilling on their roles, responsibilities, and/or on organisational policies as mandated by the CSO's constitution, and the relevant law that regulates the operations. A national umbrella CSO in the Micronesian region saw 2 expatriate volunteers deliver Governance training to the

Board and management. These volunteers then developed the governance policies and systems for that national umbrella CSO.

Institutional memory and basics about Governance mechanisms and its implementation appeared to be concentrated in a few persons at management level. One CSO leader of a national umbrella CSO in the Micronesian region submitted incomplete reports for the specific years preceding the CSO leader to the regulator. That CSO leader readily admitted to the regulator that this was due to poor documentary evidence. The regulator took this into consideration and the CSO continues to operate to this day and it is currently undergoing regulatory compliance. One CSO leader in the Melanesian region shared that as leader, she demands compliance with good Governance policies of the organisation.

These training or capacity development components have cost elements and usually with a cash-strapped CSO, this becomes less of a priority. Job training with guidance was provided by a senior member. When CSOs were asked in the OCAT process, they were very clear and cognizant of the areas of training needs required by the organisation. A priority area that was identified as an area of need was financial training

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THE ENABLING LEGISLATION REGULATING CSOS

Compliance by CSOs to the legal requirements mandated by the governing national law has mixed results. The requirement includes submission of annual reports and audited accounts of the Organisation. Another reason is deficient capacity in annually monitoring CSOs and ensuring compliance is met. Enforcement by the regulator can be viewed as swinging on a pendulum from less strict to very strict. For example, in the Micronesian region, enforcement can be described as less strict compared to Melanesian and Polynesian countries where enforcement leaned towards strict. This is especially so where the CSO receives a State grant and/or the CSO has failed to comply with regulatory requirements for some time or if the CSO publicly scrutinizes State policy.

COMPLIANCE WITH ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES/RULES AND/OR THE LACK OF RULES

Many Pacific CSOs grappled with having basic Governance policies/frameworks or Standard Operating Procedures. They also contend with understanding and implementing the policies and framework due to following factors:

- a. Lack of proper oversight on the implementation of the policies
- b. Lack of awareness and/or understanding of policies
- c. Other priorities of the organisation
- d. Lack of qualified or dedicated staff to oversee the implementation of or creation of new policies.

INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON THE CSO'S ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICES

The culture of a CSO's organisational practices is considered from 2 perspectives. Firstly, practice that has become the culture of the organisation and the second perspective is the culture of the land as the setting influences the operation of the organisation. In the first instance, many Organisations have their way of doing things which is often contrary to governance practices. This may include the decision-making process by the Board which is tainted by conflicts of interest or unethical considerations and approvals on expenditures which are based on practice rather than an actual policy.

Secondly as described above, culture and traditional practices where an organisation is situated influences the way in which decisions are made. Often the decisions of traditional leaders, elders or "prominent persons" in the Board is unlikely to be questioned due to cultural protocols and their traditional authority in that country.

ALLIANCES

Forming alliances with other Organisations who share a common vision is strategic and necessary. It requires the Organisations to deliberately work to improve relationships for the medium and short terms. For one NGO, it was a protracted and checkered journey with little or no financial benefit to the NGO. This NGO had to salvage its organisational reputation. However, the benefits that accrued to the NGO were steadily realised over time such as the ability of the Organisation to re-engage with donors and enter fora/spaces on critical public policy issues.

Trust and relationship building were viewed as important goals for a CSO when forming strategic alliances. However, these goals may be marred by personal driven agenda of a CSO or a group of CSOs.

PERSONALITY DRIVEN AGENDAS

Often alliances and networks were designed around personality rather than similar mandates. The challenge with personality driven agendas is that it can be difficult for smaller organisations who work on the same thematic issues as larger organisations to access funding opportunities or become part of the network of organisations with similar thematic backgrounds. Moreover, this is due to the small and often shrinking spaces for CSO's in the region. Competing rather than working collaboratively for the resources often means that organisations pitch against each other for alliances and network and often let their personalities dictate the nature of their relationship.

Also, organisations and alliances driven by personality are unsustainable as they last as long as the personality lasts or as long as other personalities or groups entertain the said personality.

RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

This Report acknowledges that nepotism and cronyism occur under Conflicts of Interest and can be managed with simple policy changes and attention to practice.

Management of Conflict of Interest alone is insufficient as this is preceded by definition and recognition or identification as to what constitutes a Conflict of Interest. The spectrum of ignorance that exists in some Pacific CSOs range from ignorance to openly brazen attitudes and behaviour while dealing with conflict of interest.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Most of the CSOs in the Micronesian region that were largely reliant on volunteers had leaders who appeared to be strong on planning and administration. As a result, these CSO leaders were event driven. A focus on soliciting dedicated funding in ensuring the medium and long-term continuity of the CSO is also needed.

This factor played a pivotal role in determining the shape and form of financial systems and processes implemented by the CSO. In the absence of donor funding, including but not limited to core funding, these CSOs established simple financial systems and processes to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of funds. In the absence of a financial manual, this occurred in 2 ways—the donor pays a vendor directly as it relates to an event such as International Women's Day, or the CSO holds a bank account. Volunteers take screens shots of signed cheques, equipment, keep receipts/acquittal and obtain monthly bank statements - to facilitate monthly cash and bank reconciliations. This documentation was part of the reporting process to the donor and financial accountability requirements of the CSO. One CSO in the Micronesian region noted that they had a draft financial manual which was undergoing further revisions.

In some umbrella national CSOs, especially in the Melanesian and Polynesian region, lack of financial accountability, roles and purpose of Boards as it relates to financial oversight were significant governance concern. This can be attributed to the lack of capacity, and general complacency on Governance issues over time. In one umbrella CSO, the strong performance of one of its branches members positively impacted the governance realities facing the national umbrella CSO. This example of strong performance led the national umbrella CSO executive council to take proactive steps to improve its Governance. Committees were to form to make suggestions to amend its Constitution, steps were taken to develop financial, human resource and other pertinent organisational policies. Establishment of systems were created to help strengthen that CSO's Governance for the approval of the umbrella national AGM. In the case of this CSO, traditional leadership proved advantageous in that its leaders used their privilege to leverage and mobilise support to facilitate the improvement of Governance in the national umbrella CSO.

LACK OF FINANCIAL OR PROCUREMENT POLICY

There is generally a lack of financial and/or procurement policy for many Pacific CSOs. As a result, there is no coherent or systematic way of properly receiving and/or dispensing money. Organisations without these policies often rely over the years on their general practice of making payments and/or making purchases without a verification system in place.

Leaders of a national umbrella CSO and a national CSO from the Polynesian and Melanesian regions respectively when taking up office in the past year to 3 years, immediately identified the inefficiencies in the financial controls. They put in place stringent financial controls and systems such as payment vouchers, increasing the number of signatories to the CSO's bank account from 1 signatory to 2 of the 3 signatories, with the Treasurer of the Board as the standard signatory to the CSO's bank account.

LACK OF PROPER AUDIT OR PUBLICATION OF AUDIT REPORTS

Most CSOs have not audited their accounts since the inception of the Organisation. It is also a rare practice for many Organisations to publicise their annual or financial reports. This lack of accountability means that it is difficult to obtain donor funding. Donors require the implementation of sound Governance policies and practices in the CSO. In some extreme cases, donors have lowered their own financial standards and only seek project-specific audits which they fund instead of the full organisational audit which provides the transparent state of partnership credibility.

DONOR COMPLIANCES MECHANISMS

Donors take the usual path when scoping for CSO partners for their bilateral and even their regional funded programme. A bilateral funding is directly to a country and usually negotiated by the mission in-country or desk officer for the country. Regional funding can be broad multi-country programme on a thematic area. Funds may be through the government mechanism or framework or in some cases directly to an existing partner.

The donor or funder will set some basic partner assessment process, invitations and proposals will be called for. The first hurdle for the CSO is to find someone to draw up the proposal. In some cases, if the donor sees you as a preferred partner, they will offer the resource to assist the Organisation to draw up the proposal.

Governance checks will be applied as the first discriminating process. Registration, audits, HR audit are the first areas of scrutiny. Constitution and strategic plans neither here nor there is required by the desk officer for their records.

The focus at the initial stage is towards developing a good solid proposal and therefore programme management issues such as strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks, developing clearer Theory of Change, spelling out programme and activity processes are looked at rigorously. Very little scrutiny is on the actual organisational or financial Governance. Bank accounts and bank statements are furnished but only for the purpose of transfers to a company or organisational account.

Meeting the standards, the reporting frameworks, revelations from the mid-term reviews, scoping visits by the donor or desk officer, or the external mid-term reviewer will flag areas for the Organisation to address. These changes are made only to ensure the CSO partner is in compliance.

CSOs often struggling to meet implementation targets due to poor Governance and organisation's decision making. The risks to underspend, overspend, under delivery emerges. The onus falls on the CSO to deal within the Organisation. The donor will not send support for the already resource challenged CSO. Instead, the donor distances itself, sends strong messages for the Organisation to comply then withhold funds.

When CSOs impose training on programme management, it will be a form of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) approach, it complies with the project cycle. Most of the well trained managers under a donor funder will find their way to become programme managers for the donor themselves.

To some degree, donors and funders are averse to supporting organisational and financial Governance realities with their CSO partners. They would prefer that the Organisation to fix their own problems. If they do engage, donors focused mostly on the programme management element end of the CSO business.

The possibility of both donor and funders contributing and included in their programme design organisational and financial governance support for the first 6 months would be advantageous before full programme implementation. Built in assessments, audit checks, registration, constitution and organisation reviews, human and finance policy reviews and development or reviews of existing strategic plans and carrying the cost of key personnel outline would be beneficial.

The value for money definition should be redefined to consider these costs as part of the programme sustainability insurance and carried by the donors as part of their programme commitment.

SECTION 8. CASE STUDIES – A DEEPER DIVE INTO THE KEY LEARNINGS – GOVERNANCE AND INFLUENCING

Three case studies are drawn from each of the Pacific sub regions: Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. While these 3 case studies demonstrate realities that exist in CSOs across the region, they also highlight how the contextual environments in which these organisations operate can influence and or determine their Governance architecture. Each of the Organisations assess their organisational capacity based on the OCAT. The common realities that are illustrated include: the lack of founding documents or structures such as policies or constitutions. For most of these Organisations, adhering to the legal requirements of registrations and priorities in management is lost as they sought to keep the organisation afloat.

Clearly the need to build capacity may be easier for Organisations that have access to resources, networks and volunteers who bring their expertise and skills to bear into the organisation. However, many CSOs are largely grass-root driven. The pool of volunteers often cannot address the gaps in policy management or legal skills. Therefore, addressing the Governance deficits will remain problematic. To address these gaps, CSOs may need to strategically identify people in their community who have the skill sets and are willing to contribute towards improving the organisation.

Practical steps need to be identified towards the growth process of the Organisation. While the OCA Guide provides the functional capabilities, that the CSO have used, there is a need to identify progressive steps that the CSOs ought to take to move the functional capabilities in a progressive manner from Seedling to Planting to Maturing to Harvesting. This will require ongoing support and/or mentoring programmes that ensure that CSOs that are part of the RPV project will improve in their respective state of governance affairs.

The following section provides the juxtaposed journeys of the organisational Governance growth alongside its own influencing and purpose fulfillment goals, addressing developmental objectives, working with the multiple actors and partners in various spheres and levels. This then becomes a study of the intersectionality of actors, issues, and organisational and development objectives and how they are playing in the different levels and spaces. This section looks at this complex convergence of all these issues in which the Pacific CSOs work and operate in.

MELANESIAN REGION

SViT

Background

A Fiji based national umbrella CSO, the SViT was established in 1924. It is the oldest CSO in Fiji. It is a non-political and non-sectarian organisation. The SViT's membership is drawn from the indigenous Fijian women (above the age of 16 years) within the 14 provinces in Fiji. The SViT was established under the Fiji Charitable Trusts Act.

Constitution – Since 1923, SViT has a Constitution.

Organisational structure: SViT has a National Executive Board and a National Council. It is supported by 14 provincial branches which have their own councils. The head of each provincial branch council reports to the National Executive Board of the SViT.

Over the years unaddressed organisational structure issues have led to Governance realities – one of which can be attributed to the Governance realities encountered by provincial councils²³.

Contribution to Fiji's national development

For example, 2 women nominees from the SViT were nominees to the then Great Council of Chiefs – the apex body of the indigenous iTaukei community²⁴.

The SViT leadership is rooted in its traditional chiefly leadership of iTaukei women which in some respects has enabled it to yield power and authority within the Organisation.

Governance Realities and how it addressed it.

Over the years, SViT has applied the “remora mechanism”²⁵ to some extent by aligning itself with the government of the day. Due to their traditional chiefly leadership, they were able to effectively use it to engage in the corridors of power.

The strong performance by one of its provincial branches combined with the leadership's participation in the OCAT assessment were key factors that led the SViT to take proactive steps to address its Governance realities. Further, the donor community made it clear to the leadership of SViT that it must get its “house in order”. SSVT chose to address its governance realities in a clear, systematic and expeditious manner.

In conducting its self-assessment (in September 2020) and applying its “Rebbilib”, the SViT recognized various governance realities that was necessary to address to strengthen its governance. From the 4 functional capabilities, the SViT rated itself to be in the seedling phase on Governance Structure. In the areas of organisational structure and management, human resources and finances, SViT rated herself in the Planting Phase. These honest assessments are crucial to the Organisation's recognition of the architectures that are necessary to be strengthened and or applied in order to take the Organisation to the desired level of Governance. It was obvious that longevity of the Organisation is built on the visionary foundation of the membership and the passion of the iTaukei women members towards economic and political empowerment. Despite the fact that the Organisation has remained stunted in its governance growth, it remains visible and active in a range of activities involving its members since 1923.

²³ See Volumes 1 to 4 of the Fiji Auditor-General's reports on the accounts of the 14 Provincial Council, for example <http://www.oag.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PP-NQ.-43-of-2020-Report-on-Provincial-Councils-Volume-3.pdf> [accessed on 1 April 2021]

²⁴ This iTaukei institution was provided for in the abrogated 1997 Constitution and subsequently abolished by Military Decree in 2012.

²⁵ In marine biology, the remora or sucker fish is carried along by the shark or mantra ray, allowing the remora to travel to different areas without having to expend its own energy to swim. The shark is completely unaffected by the remora's presence: see <https://www.britannica.com/animal/remora> [accessed on 26 December 2020]

The key governance Realities identified by the organisation includes –

- Lack of capacity in the area of governance, and the need for greater transparency and accountability from all levels of the organisation;
- Absence of clear policies and procedures including a Financial Policy;
- No holding of Annual General Meetings;
- Lack of awareness by the members about the activities of the Organisation;
- The need to socialize the organisational structure to its members;
- Lack of finances to support its work and delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2022
- Lack of audited financial accounts and
- No attempts to modernize its constitution.

Steps taken by SViT to address its governance realities

In January 2021, SSVT held a National Council meeting which endorsed its Compliance committee recommendations for 8 policies: Financial Manual, Human Resource Policy, Grant Policy, Asset Policy, Volunteer Policy, Child Protection Policy, and Safeguard Policy. Financial reports from 2018 and 2019 accounts and the proposed budget for 2021 were presented and endorsed as well.

The significant next step is for leadership to recognize that current state of Governance did not provide an environment for progress and change. The leadership understood that there was room for the Organisation to be more effective and efficient.

The OCAT structure allowed the members to create a space for the members to address the elephant in the room, issues with their direction and agreed to by leadership. The policy subcommittees were established, and steps were taken to actively bring the house to order and with it a review of the strategic plan.

At the time of reporting the policies were drafted, the strategic plan reviewed and accounts finalized were for audit. An overall vote of confidence in the organisation was expressed by its members. The Organisation was also looking and considering a business plan around their property.

Lessons

This self-assessment while challenging from an Organisational perspective, is crucial to inform the Organisation's strategy of necessary improvement and this is what the SViT has identified through this exercise. In retrospect, there has been marked improvements as a few of the issues identified herein has been implemented by the Leadership structure of the SViT. It is recognised that the traditional hierarchal leadership, structure and practices which permeates the SViT has augured well for it for some time, despite its governance realities. There is an organisational culture of mutual respect and deference to "vanua" leadership, an embodiment of women's role in the community, in the family and in national affairs, and the value that this brings to the objectives of the Organisation. Whilst these roles that members play are predicated on a traditional platform, they also form the Governance structure that had carried the Organisation over the years. Structures are determined by cultural positions, leadership, seniority, and community standing among others. It is important to highlight that this Report does not seek to make redundant this structure that has obviously worked over the years, rather to build on it and to ensure that a more robust Organisation with well-defined Governance architectures in place.

Good leadership thrives within a space of good Governance because it is motivated by the principles of accountability, transparency, and inclusivity. The SViT has demonstrated some of these principles within its existing structure. It should continue to improvise in growing its functional capabilities from Seedling or Planting phases to the desired objective of the Harvesting phase. A clear example of a Governance change was when a provincial SSVT branch addressed their own leadership and governance realities by making significant reforms within the organisation and took bold steps to address its internal governance gaps. This will undoubtedly reap benefits not only at the provincial branch but for SViT as a whole, immediately and into the future.

CSOs are largely internally regulated, and it is important that these regulatory frameworks are constantly reviewed and strengthened to ensure that the organisation is well positioned to confront any governance challenge that may arise.

Comparative Analysis – Key Learnings of Three Pacific Women’s CSO

The 3 women’ Organisations in the 3 countries covered by the programme offer critical and interesting insights on some of the governance realities they faced. As the umbrella Organisations for large constituencies, the 3 Organisations have history and journeys that are very much tied to development and social justice in their respective countries.

The RPV programme crossed paths with them in 2020. Their journey included grappling with organisational governance and influencing realities that is very much interlinked. Some of the standout learnings drawn from their experience include the following key governance challenges:

- **Membership and constituency relationship** – One of the common challenges that appeared to beset the Organisations were in the managing the relationship between the management Board and leadership, and the Organisation’s constituencies. It was a symbiotic partnership, with lots of tension, and many elephants in the room crowding the meeting forums. Members failed to pay subscriptions not because they were without funds or resources but more so withheld because they did not see the organisation performing to the organisation’s purpose. Secondly, it was prioritizing other issues that were determined centrally and that as constituents, they were simply carrying out instructions and directions.

Meanwhile the Organisation management and Board and leadership felt that because the members were not providing resources through their subscriptions, they would determine the strategic direction of the organisation. The Organisation was finding funding sources and resources externally and therefore

leadership drove their agenda as they saw fit.

The provincial constituencies who were well resourced, had solid Governance frameworks and leadership were able to forge ahead and in some way became rival leads for a lead organisation, this becomes a double edged sword as they saw members who moved independently and would set an example for other provincial leads to follow; thus reducing the head Organisation to a point of irrelevance.

This was the case of 2 national women’s Organisations covered by the programme.

At the OCAT forum, the leader was provided the opportunity to give the history of the head Organisation and presented a strong case; that all the women members form a mobilized united body to be louder and more influential voice than separate entities.

It allowed members to voice that they then would like the head Organisation to address such as the very basic issues of developing the key Governance, weak areas such as finance and HR Policies, review of the Strategic Plan and the Constitution, and to work towards getting the accounts audited and presented to members.

- **Fundraising** - This remains a constant challenge as the costs for maintaining an efficiently managed office and delivering on programme implementation commitments were generally inconsistent and limited. If the organisation did not have a business plan or an income generating arm, then it was difficult to sustain the level of support required to run an organisation effectively and efficiently. The 3 women’ organisation had business models with art and craft, sewing and traditional craftwork, gardening and other working groups from the various communities, providing these for sale by the head CSO. Some of the Organisations have property and space that were used on hire basis for meetings and workshops and some provided

catering for these events as a means of supporting the fundraising efforts.

The Fiji scenario saw the SViT look towards a grander plan of having a significant modern centre for culture and learning, consolidating design features that would meet the needs of the organisation as a headquarter, rent out real estate to a regional organisation and at the same time be a central meeting point for learning, cultural exchanges and development, art and craftwork and skills sharing for indigenous women of Fiji. This of course needs to be funded and approaches are being made to donors to support infrastructural projects for national women's initiatives. These grander plans also speak to the fatigue that these Organisations face with the ongoing, labour, logistics and management, and the intensive work which did not have government support in the marketing of these products. The products were unsold and many craft stores closed down.

The scale and focus of fundraising efforts vary according to the context, size of the Organisations and their ability to explore and create business opportunities.

- **Influencing platforms** – Influencing is bread and butter for the Women's CSO Organisations in the Pacific. Many of them have cut their teeth in the political and economic development of their countries. All 3 partners can lay claim to examples of significant policy influencing successes. Contribution to the constitution that include the recognition of gender and women in the constitution's Bill of Rights. In another country, the referendum for independence required the women to sign off and participate as active signatories in that critical national decision. All 3 contributed to the development of the alternative report to CEDAW.

One of the Organisation was looking to legislate a temporary special measure but is dealing with differences in the influencing approach with another strong Women's lobbying group. Women's CSOs, however, are unparalleled in their

influencing capacity and they are active in many of the influencing spaces at the local, national, regional and global levels.

- **Competition** – This is natural phenomenon for 2 CSOs in 2 sub-regions; the umbrella women's Organisation were facing competition with another rival women's group. The rival group had gathered enough support and influence of the government to acknowledge and recognize them as a working partner. This is especially challenging when the government and individuals within government and government departments "validate" another player and favour them as representatives in working groups and as Partners in projects and activities for women, inadvertently sidelining the "mandated" CSO into a lesser role or even worse as a non-entity.

This is based on government's assessment that the newer partner has the capacity to undertake a better performance of mobilizing the constituent, and that their programmes were active, functional and relevant. The fostering of the partnership is even more seamless if a minister has an interest or is a supporter of the other group.

For the historical women's CSO group, the challenge is expounded even further if they themselves had organisational and financial governance issues and was perceived as ineffective. This is exacerbated if they have fundraising challenges. Their leverage is have existing membership and participants in some of the regional and global influencing platforms.

- **Leadership** – Two charismatic women leaders who are highly regarded and pioneers were leaders in their work with women. They have been part of the history of the Organisation, and have a strong relationship within their constituency. They are well connected socially, command presence and people of influence lend them their ears. This has worked for the Organisation. They have become the keepers of the house and have led the organisation through

many watershed historical events. In the Pacific, where relationships are important and with work, faith and family stand behind you, with doors open.

In the space of influencing, the smarts of thinking and working politically requires that kind of political maturity, gravitas and connections. Two Organisations have stood the test of time in their maneuvering their environments.

That aside, one of the Organisations is grappling more with the challenges of what the future may hold for the Organisation, the need to be current, relevant, robust and ready. The leadership has taken the bold step to get the house in order, groom new leadership and set the platform for the organisation to be forward looking.

In the Micronesia sub-region, the Women's Organisation is hamstrung with organisational governance and fundraising challenges. More importantly, they struggle with recognition by key stakeholders such as government and members. Members were waiting for support from the head body, but in the period of inactivity have aligned themselves with other women's groups, who show vigour, and activity.

Another setting saw a rival women's group attempting to use their access to power to influence policy. While both organisations wanted to achieve the same objective of legislation for women to be better represented in government, they both have different perspectives to achieve this goal. One preferred to work within the system and through the access to power afforded by political constituency and relationships. The other preferred to utilize protest advocacy, public outcry, media and public campaigns to create awareness to force the government to consider changes through legislation.

These scenarios provide insight to the dynamics between governance and influencing. In the words of one of the women leaders, "for us to be effective, we have to get our house in order." There is constant challenge where many national thematic leads and leaders can either block or enable the changes that can make the Organisation effective.

POLYNESIAN REGION

TANGO

Background

TANGO is a non-profit organisation in Tuvalu that aims “to promote and support sustainable community”. This engagement is through access to funding, training, and information, and collaboration and communication between NGOs, government and international agencies.

TANGO is registered as a CSO under the Tuvalu Incorporation of Non-Governmental Organisations Act. It is the most visible NGO in Tuvalu and has the important role of coordinating, strengthening capacities of their members. It also conducts member’s strategic needs assessment which is used to inform appropriate strategic interventions.

TANGO conducted its Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) in February 2019. This was based on the Organisational Capacity Assessment Guide for Pacific Civil Society Organisations (the OCA Guide) which was developed under the RPV Project. TANGO members conducted its self-assessment based on the 4 functional capacities identified in the Guide. The non-profit highlighted its results as Seedling phase for its Governance, and Structure and Mechanisms, Planting Phase for its Organisational Structure and Management, and Planting Phase for its Human Resources and Finances respectively.

Contribution to Tuvalu’s national development

TANGO as the parent CSO body in Tuvalu. TANGO is positioned to support other members and CSOs through government funding and other funding opportunities through the donor network. TANGO has relied heavily on its unique position as the national umbrella CSO to leverage the support and networks needed to drive its organisational mandate. TANGO has been operating on a peripheral basis as it has internal governance challenges which need immediate attention and action

While TANGO has strong leadership, it has created challenges which needs to be addressed in a constructive and sustainable manner cognizant of the Tuvaluan context.

Key governance challenges

The Self-Assessment has revealed various Governance gaps that were crucial to be addressed in order to strengthen the governance framework of TANGO. These include:

- The need to review and reform the Organisation’s Constitution and Strategic Plan.
- Given the small population of Tuvalu, many Board members are related. While this may not pose obvious challenges, it is imperative that TANGO put in place concrete provisions regarding declaration of conflicts of interest and for the recusal from meeting decisions where there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest.
- Need to do financial audits in a timely manner.
- Lack of proper policies including Human Resources and socialization of the Organogram to members.
- Need for proper financial manual or policy.

Key Recommendations to address these Governance Challenges are:

- The need to revise the Constitution and the Strategic Plan to ensure it is responsive to the current needs and circumstances.
- Clarity around roles of Board and defined processes for accountability and transparency in the membership and decision-making process of the Board.
- The need of a functioning Board with defined deliverables.
- To socialize key organisational policies and processes to members such as CSO Goals and Strategy, process of membership, and of Governance structure;
- To engage in organisation audit.

Lessons

As one of the smallest Pacific Island States, Tuvalu has its own strength and development challenges. Its size means that there are greater levels of relationship that can be built around its traditional structures and proximity such as the *kaupule* or the *te-fale pili*.²⁶

These structures embody the interactions and relationships that can be harnessed towards driving good governance principles. Deference to the respect for leadership and processes when applied properly in the context of an organisation, will mean that everyone is operating for the common good. When issues are identified and addressed in the context of traditional structures, it can also be applied within the Organisation. As demonstrated by TANGO's experience, there are often strong iconic figures on the Board. Friction in leadership occurs where strong personalities influence the decision making. However, if this is harnessed, then the strong personalities can contribute to pushing for needed Governance reforms and organisational strengthening. Strong, decisive and compassionate leadership is needed in CSO Organisations in the region, and smaller Pacific nations like Tuvalu can lead the way.

Moreover, while the capacity assessment recognises the need to strengthen the Board processes, there are also opportunities to support the Organisation's leadership. TANGO has a dynamic young female leader who is committed to implementing good governance policies. However, this would need the sanction and support of her Board. The issues identified in the organisational self-assessment can be remedied if the steps identified is implemented in a manner that is inclusive, consultative, and transparent. Strong leadership at both the Board and the management levels is necessary if TANGO is to effectively carry out its role in Tuvalu.

²⁶ Tuvaluan concept of *te fale-pili*, which literally means houses in close proximity to one another, and which implies a moral responsibility to protect neighbors was used by the Minister for Foreign Affairs Hon Simon Kofe in formulating a Pacific Pathway to Humanitarian Response for Covid 19. See <https://www.un.int/tuvalu/news/pacific-islands-forum-agrees-establish-pacific-humanitarian-pathway-covid-19> accessed on 25 April 2021

Steps taken by TANGO to strengthen its internal governance.

Since TANGO undertook the OCAT assessment, updates on the steps taken by TANGO to address its governance challenges is not known.

Comparative Analysis – Key Learnings Three National Umbrella Organisations

The Tuvalu Association for Non-Governmental Organisations presents a great case study as a national umbrella CSO. At the time of the OCA, TANGO was an Organisation with a Board, a constitution, no strategic plan, accounts unaudited for several years, and a management team that was under pressure to create changes.

There was a state of transfixed paralysis with the unaudited accounts being the obvious and most prominent thorn in their side. The TANGO management team struggled to have programme implementation and development without first going over the hurdle to address their audit default. Confidence in the organisation waned and management struggled to stay afloat. It was kept alive by the random project and some of their core coordination work but limited in their capacity to expand or to be engaged more credibly.

At the OCA, the critical issue was to finalise the external audit for 4 years by a credible accounting firm. The audit would then allow the management to call an AGM, present the accounts, have a Board election and address all the other organisational governance issues which included a constitutional review and the development of a strategic plan.

Over the period of the programme, every activity was addressed, except the development of a strategic plan. Due to this assessment, The Ministry of Finance welcomed them to join the working group that coordinated and managed the issue of grants to CSOs. They were also able to meet and discuss with donors, to present their state of play reports and look to be engaged and partnership in future work.

The role that TANGO will play in the CSO space in Tuvalu will be the next big challenge for them. In the case in Kiribati, KANGO needed to critically address the clarification of roles.

KANGO Case Study

Following a scoping visit in Kiribati, several CSOs participated in the OCA exercises. This included KiriCAN, BIMBA, NeiMOM, AMAK, KANGO and K-WIMA joined.

In the session that looked at KANGO's strategic plan, the role of the Organisation was discussed. Former active members of the umbrella CSO raised pertinent questions on role of the umbrella Organisation. In the facilitated discussion, a concept paper was drawn up by a former senior manager and organisation lead. The implementation of the Kiribati State-NSAs Engagement Process (KSNEP) was proposed. This process would redefine the role of KANGO strategically to an active Secretariat that "improved the internal and external partnerships of CSOs".

The proposal was that KANGO would coordinate and liaise between CSOs and all stakeholders and key partners, providing the framework and support that would allow for discussion, consultation and partnerships on development issues. The discussion also allowed for KANGO and the CSOs to discuss issues related to duplication of roles in service provision, in thematic areas, and the added value that partnership and membership with KANGO would offer to the thematic leads.

It was clear that the area of dysfunction for CSOs was working with government. Working with KANGO who was represented in many government working groups would provide access to government decisions.

The strategic advantage for many umbrella Organisations is their access to government and government department. Therefore, they can play a better role as a secretariat rather than compete with the thematic leads. This is a lesson for many umbrella Organisations to learn from.

The thematic leads are the natural constituent and members to the umbrella CSOs. However, the thematic leads and newer CSOs can exist and be equally effective and functional. The umbrella Organisation need to assess the contribution of thematic leads to CSOs and whether they can function independently of the umbrella Organisation.

SUNGO - Case Study

Samoa's umbrella organisations presents the best case scenario for umbrella Organisations. They are vibrant, have new leadership, and are committed to addressing their organisational and financial governance issues. They also have a healthy working relationship with government. This allows them to focus on the important job of influencing. In the influencing exercise, they identified 2 areas in which they wanted to work in: a) to provide a platform and framework for consultation for community stakeholders on issues of the election and b) influence policy changes on the traditional land ownership. They saw the need to engage in the democratic process of consultation and dialogue; thus bringing the views of the people to government. To effectively focus on their influencing work, it was important for them to get their house in order.

The story of TANGO, KANGO and SUNGO present that umbrella Organisation can play significant roles in influencing. In OCA, they illustrated the 3 key stages, function, opportunity and space to identify the stage and progress they were in.

MICRONESIAN REGION

AMAK

Background

AMAK was established in 1982 but due to Governance challenges, it became dysfunctional. It was recently revived as the coordinating body for gender equality and women's groups in Kiribati following its governance challenges which it is continues to address. AMAK was re-established under the Incorporated Society Act in 2011.

It currently works on coordinating women's groups under the direction of the National Council of Women, comprising of representatives from Member Organisations. AMAK's objective is to provide coordination, conduct research and training, formulate development strategies and plans, establish networks and seek assistance for members locally and abroad. The role of AMAK is pivotal in women's economic and political empowerment as the organisation works towards addressing various social justice issues including violence against women.

AMAK carried out its Organisational Capacity Assessment in March 2020. It was similar to the other CSOs who carried out this activity, using the OCA Guide developed under the RPV Project to assess its organisational capability. Of the 4 Functional Capabilities, AMAK was in a Seedling phase for 3 areas namely Governance, Organisational Structure and Management and Finances. AMAK was in the Planting Phase for its Human Resources capability.

Contribution to Kiribati's national development

Organisations like AMAK are crucial to the development aspirations of the nations like Kiribati because CSO carry out various roles to support government especially around the protection and empowerment of women. Organisations like AMAK need to be supported including ensuring that it has functional Governance structures that can support programme delivery and attract the needed resources to support its core objectives. The advantage of organisations like AMAK is that they are respected in the country and have

a strong profile in terms of the work they do. They are positioned to support government as well as guide their members in the objectives of the Organisation.

Some successes include inter alia, its work with Civil Society Organisations and other Partners to submit Kiribati's first Stakeholder Report to the United Nations Human Rights Council Periodic Review of Kiribati in 2019. AMAK also contributed to the CEDAW Shadow reporting process.

Another major achievement was at the National Expo where AMAK women members were brought from across all of Kiribati to strategize about market access while showcasing and selling handicraft and cultural products.

Key governance challenges

AMAK's self-assessment revealed Governance issues that it used to justify its positionality in the functional capabilities. These issues include:

- Board membership procedure is not clear. The lack of Board meetings is problematic to the operations of the Organisation.
- Need to update Policies and Procedures;
- Developing an Organisational structure;
- Need to review and update the Financial Policy to be in line with the OCA guide. AMA does not have a financial manual which means that it does not have a finance system of checking and vetting of financial practices.
- The head of AMAK's salary and the manager who handles finance as well as administration is donor funded. Therefore, the ability of AMAK to sustain these Governance policies and practices remains a challenge. While the Board members are women, committed to AMAK's vision, the Board members need significant capacity building. Governance architecture and understanding and implementation of key Policies training is needed.

The current leader of AMAK has steadily worked to rebuild the reputational aspect of AMAK and trust with fellow CSOs.

While these functional capacities are identified as necessary for stronger Governance of AMAK, the members were also able to identify practical governance assessment. This includes:

- Translating the AMAK Constitution and relevant Policies into I-Kiribati
- Review of the Strategic Plan
- Reviewing existing structures and endorsing new Policies.
- More training and capacity building for the Board and members of the Organisation.

Lessons

Organisations like AMAK are important to communities. However, funding of the organisation needs to be secured, to ensure its workers are remunerated.

The strength of AMAK is in the spirit of volunteerism and community over the years. This has driven likeminded women to establish and maintain the Organisation despite their challenges both in capacity and resources.

While there is a recognition that governance issues persist and needs to be addressed, these challenges will not be rectified unless the needed support is provided to the Organisation. The translation of governing documents in the I-Kiribati language is vital as this is the language of communication. While the OCA self-assessment recognised the existence of organisational documents such as the Constitution, the barrier is to access the content in the language of the people. English is problematic for those that do not understand the nuances of what's covered in these documents. It is widely recognised that any legal documents in Kiribati must be translated in I-Kiribati to be utilized. This is evident in many situations where government intends to roll out any new legislation, they ensure that it is translated into I-Kiribati language. Such was the case with the domestic violence law which was agreed to be referred to in the I-Kiribati name of Te Rau n Te Mwenga (Family Protection) Act. Organisations like AMAK was able to use the Act in their community outreach because it was translated in iKiribati. However, translation work requires money and time which the Organisation does not have.

Moreover, AMAK also acknowledge that a critical step forward is to have volunteers who can help with revising the Constitution, and the need to facilitate an Annual General Meeting. It is in this meeting, the Policies of the Organisation can be put forward for consideration.

Steps taken by AMAK to strengthen its internal governance

It is an on-going process which is largely dependent on donor funding to ensure sustainability and longevity of AMAK.

Comparative Analysis – Key Learnings Three Pacific CSOs who contribute to the UDHR Convention Reporting Spaces

An interesting scenario emerged at the Kiribati OCA when the strategic plan was presented and discussed. It was an opportunity for the facilitators to share the most recent CEDAW shadow report, which they had just presented at the Human Rights Council. The organisation head highlighted the issues of economic justice, EAW women in political leadership, providing a perspective which spoke for Kiribati and was drawn from the consultation with their traditional consultation partners.

At the OCA, were the newly established Single Mothers CSO— NeiMOM, the Kiribati Women in Maritime association K-WIMA, the LGBTQI and the umbrella organisation KANGO. It became apparent that the CSOs who were in the room were potential contributors to a CEDAW Report. These groups had their own record keeping of membership, constituency and areas of work, their stories of discrimination and efforts at correcting their situation. What it also highlighted to AMAK was that the traditional membership approach where Womens groups represented the major islands had failed to recognize changes. The population had shifted to Tarawa, the capital and that there were prospective partners in the new women CSOs on the main island. Some of these prospective partners were in the room and had made their contribution to the CEDAW Report. They were groups that were consulted and can provide a rich and more inclusive current reflection of the state of Women in Kiribati.

For Vanuatu, the programme management lead for the Vatu Mauri Consortium (VMC) is also the Secretary to the Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition. The VMC offered the significant partnership with Vanuatu's 4 pillars. At the Self Determination Forum lead by Mal Vatu Mauri, the evidence of partnerships worked into the agenda of the Vanuatu Human Rights Coalition. The partnerships strengthened the capacity to mobilise across the Melanesian sub region and across to Tahiti; bringing in the key players for self-determination across the Pacific. All of the members attending the Forum contributed to the CERD reports for their respective countries, attended the UN key meetings (including C20 spaces) to lobby for their rights as Indigenous peoples and against the discrimination in their countries.

Samoa's SUNGO is the lead CSO body working with the Samoa Human Rights Taskforce. SUNGO prepared the shadow report to Samoa's Universal periodic Review. It is a significant role and getting their house in order consolidates their position as a lead CSO leading Human Rights work in Samoa.

The key lesson from the 3 scenarios is that there is a coherent relationship between the principles of good Governance, upholding and respecting human rights, and the responsibilities that come with it. Nothing hurts a cause more than to have questions about the appointments in the Organisation, the financial health and whether the Organisation is respected and taken seriously. Without good Governance, doors will close, seats will be withdrawn and microphones muted for you.

Learning Notes: Intersectionality

With the 3 case studies and the comparative analysis discussion, women groups include women faith groups, women in employment and development sectors, women not engaged in the formal employment sector, and teenage mothers. They all contribute to the depth and the quality of discussions. They can also add to the richness of stories that affect women's lives, women who are also very much part of various other spaces, sectors, institutions as illustrated in the Kiribati scenario.

The SViT reflected on the role of a traditional structure, the Fijian and iTaukei traditional structures. This include examining the women working at the provincial levels, as well as transcending into the village and familial settings. Their issues for development are not limited to benefit themselves or that they work as an exclusive entity, instead, we see Indigenous women's Organisations work to improve the livelihood of women in the traditional structure that includes family, community and province. Women organisations reinforce and strengthen the partnerships and the interconnectedness of the iTaukei Indigenous community.

Their introduction of the language that includes gender in the 1990 constitutions is a significant step for Fiji. The recognition of gender remained in the following constitutions and then in the 2013 where it was embedded within the Bill of Rights.

The SViT is also a member of the National Council of Women, transcending race to collaborate with women of ethnic and cultural diversity.

The same intersectionality is seen in the work of the national umbrella CSOs whose work brings together the various member CSOs; working in the different thematic and diverse sectors. They ensure that engagement with government and development partners is consultative and participatory at all levels.

The current Organisational Capacity Assessment ask for reflection on their constitution, strategic plan, and its influence on work, purpose and resourcing. The mapping and analysis exercises in the Rebbilib point to the importance of intersectionality and this is illustrated in the 3 case studies.

SECTION 9. KEY LEARNINGS FROM THE GOVERNANCE CAPACITY STRENGTHENING EXPERIENCE OF THE PACIFIC CSOS

Examining the literature, and the body of work to strengthen the capacity of the Pacific CSOs included documentation from UNDP, PIFS, the national governments, Development partners such as ADB, DFAT, IWDA, EU, EED and BfdW, PIANGO and the PRNGO alliances, to name a few. It is interesting to note that unless there is a review or evaluation of the measure of success, it is hard to determine the impact of interventions into strengthening CSOs.

There are more lessons to be learnt and the OCAT experience provides some reflection on what the capacity strengthening work with CSOs has meant for the RPV team. This may resonate with work undertaken by the multitude of other similar partners. The OCAT process can only make these deductions on learning from the many imperfect approaches applied by the team, learning the ground rules drawn from the members themselves and building on the experiences of the work.

While this section outlines the approach and methodology undertaken by the programme and learnings drawn from the process, it also brings us to ask the following question:

1. How much longer do we have to be capacitated?
2. What investment is needed into building competencies and what are the hidden costs?
3. How do you acknowledge, address and manage relationships as a functional component of capacity strengthening?

The Raising Pacific Voices OCA tool is only one of the tools employed and this report focuses on the learnings drawn from the process. The learnings noted below are purely from the OCA experience and we will discuss this from 2 perspectives:

- i. Methodology and Approach
- ii. Content

Methodology and Approach Lessons

- The OCAT assessment approach is not setting itself up as the model or as the ideal approach as this would discredit the volume of work which is available. It is one of the many approaches that complements the other work. For this report, it can only speak to lessons learnt, in illustrating what has worked and what has been challenging in the context of the programme.
- What has worked for the programme and the OCAT roll out is that firstly, it is a Pacific developed assessment tool for Governance. It was drawn initially from the Vanuatu experience, transferred to Tonga and in partnership with PIANGO and CSFT. The design was to develop a tool that would be appropriate for the Pacific context.
- It was tested with CSFT and established the basis for the current tool and methodology. The themes were identified to provide opportunities to self-evaluate growth. The membership and preferred participants was also identified to ensure it was participatory, inclusive, transparent and relevant.

- Key questions were provided for participants to make honest assessments of where they were. The evaluation questions challenged participants to address the awkward questions. At each level, consensus was required before they proceeded further.
- The levels were framed as stages of growth and around the concept of a Samoan Fale, a building and structure familiar to many Pacific Islanders.
- The focus and results were visualized as prospective targets of achievements rather points of demerit.
- **OCAT + Safeguarding** — one of the elements of assessments that was included as a preface to the OCAT specific assessment was Safeguarding. As the focus of the Safeguarding developed over the first few sessions, it was logical to have it similar to the other themes that is to have reflective exercises. The commitment was to do no harm in the process programme implementation by the organisation.
- **The safeguarding component exposed many of the CSOs weakness on human rights.** This was based on the lens applied to their work, the consideration of revisiting and the possible harmful impact their programmes may have on their constituents, target groups and programme beneficiaries.

Learnings points

- **Context drawn** from tried and tested
- **Piloted with partners**
- The **right partners** engaged
- **Framed to context** – relevant and familiar benchmarks or levels of measure
- **Language and concepts** that are constructive, progressive frames rather than punitive ones that focus on weaknesses, attritions, failings and gaps.
- **Consensus focused** that allows for egalitarian decision-making and platforms for discussions.
- **Inclusive space** that have all stakeholders in the discussion. Participatory processes and format that encourage everyone to speak without fear of persecution or judgment,
- **Relational consideration** – It is important and mandatory that the process of introducing your team and the organisation, that you present yourselves with truth and humility. It was a key learning point for the team to introduce themselves, where they were from, their race, faith, and cultural background. It was important to introduce the programme and the organisation with sincerity, humility and with restraint. The introduction of people and the Organisation provided the connectedness and sets the tone for Pacific people to determine how they will react and respond. It sets the rules for relational engagement.

The team found that other external pre-judgments existed, historic faux pas and the fact that Oxfam was an INGO. Challenges encountered during the scoping phase may be related to the fact that Oxfam was viewed as a BINGO, and that bad experiences with former project members, or issues with the Organisations leadership could impact future engagement.

Content Lessons

The report discusses the content issue quite significantly especially in Section 6. The wealth of the learnings speak to the relevance of the content as we looked at the process, the application, results and case studies in section 8. This means that in understanding Governance in the CSO Pacific context, the assessment tool captures the raw assessment which can be utilized for the purposes of analysis.

The next interesting measure is to hold the OCAT assessments against 8 principles of good governance and this is what the degree or rating is:

1. accountability
2. equitability and inclusivity,
3. transparency
4. participatory
5. effectiveness and efficiency
6. compliance to the rule of law
7. responsive
8. consensus-oriented

Drawing specifically from the OCAT exercises below are some considerations for Governance in the CSOs in the Pacific region:

Conducting a mapping exercise of the gaps and deficiencies of governance policies and systems of a CSO

With the support from the Organisation, there is the need to design and/or formulate the appropriate policies and framework that is necessary for good Governance of the Organisation. Mapping and solutions design that are concise, practical and doable are critical within annual plans of the Organisations in the Pacific region.

Leadership training of CSO governance mechanisms – CSO Board, Management and all staff

There is an urgent need for more training on thematic areas, especially in Leadership. The need for leadership training for both management and the Board is crucial to address various Governance deficiencies. This Report acknowledges that it is wary of Leadership Training per se because the world, and the region underwent, and in some cases continues to, engage in the many leadership courses and trainings that have come with the development sector. This was from government to communities to academia, private sector and CSOs – but the result has been dismal. The question really, is why? This area needs a Deep Dive analysis.

Regular and sustained capacity building of CSOs in governance policies and practices

Maybe these CSOs could do well to learn from the best practices of international NGOs such as World Wildlife Fund and other Organisations. For example, their Whistleblower provisions can be utilized and adapted.

Establishment of a Board charter including a Code of Conduct

Ensure that the Board is the apex body in a CSO which drives the implementation of Governance as it will eventually trickle down to management. For example, actual or potential conflicts of interests should be a standing agenda item for all CSO Board and staff meetings. Furthermore, an actual or perceived conflict of interest clause must be clearly stated and remedial action needs to take place when necessary. Recusal of a Board and or staff member from any deliberations about a specific meeting agenda item where there has been a declared actual or perceived conflict of interest is an example. This should also be reflected in the documentation of all board and staff deliberations.

Make effective use of professionals outside the Board

Supplementing the Board with outside professionals can bring expertise and critical analysis into discussions – a CSO Constitution should have committees where outside professionals can be co-opted to provide specific expert advice. Such a body may best be described as an Advisory so they do not make decisions but provide guidance as and when it is needed. However, some Pacific countries have a small pool to draw from in terms of required technical expertise so the engagement of volunteers into such CSOs ought to be done with caution and care.

Financial accountability

There ought to be greater financial accountability within CSOs to improve the overall Governance of the organisation. This is the reason Pacific CSOs recognize the importance of giving urgent priority to the development of organisational financial policy or the review and reform of its current financial policy which is stated in this Report. Furthermore, CSOs are encouraged to systemically address the eleven quantitative indicators so that they have an open and transparent financial policy and process and that all CSO board members, management staff are regularly trained on its implementation.

Given the reliance of CSOs on donor funding, it is crucial to build the financial accountability culture within CSOs so that Donors can be encouraged to assist CSOs with organisational budgeting. This will enable CSOs to move away from supporting event type activities or specific projects due to financial necessity.

Sharing of expertise amongst CSOs within sub regions

Pacific CSOs who are at the maturing or harvesting stage in any or all of the 5 governance areas as shown in this report are encouraged to share their Governance experience such as financial expertise with governance challenged CSOs.

SECTION 10. UNDERSTANDING THE STATE OF GOVERNANCE FROM THE OCAT AND RAISING PACIFIC VOICE PROGRAMME

Informal and village-based structures (rural and remote) that are community purpose driven have long existed in Pacific countries²⁷. The establishment of the Civil Society Organisation is a recent development. These are created under the Charitable Trust Acts or its national equivalent to be formally registered. In examining most of these legislative frameworks in the Pacific region, the activities were linked to charity work rather than the modern-day concerns of democracy, governance, rule of law, and the environment. Some of these Acts list assistance to the poor, handicapped, education of disadvantaged communities, Arts, helping the blind and deaf, among others as types of charity work²⁸.

The growth and evolution of the CSO sector in the Pacific region can be said to be a result of a myriad of challenges brought about by globalisation, independence of Pacific countries from colonial rulers, and establishment of country constitutions. Pacific countries' growing interactions with the international community and the global community is important in making the State accountable for its actions and is required under international Human Rights architecture.

As earlier mentioned, the State of Governance in and amongst CSOs in the Pacific region is both complex and diverse. General complacency, use of volunteerisms and a CSO's focus on delivering on its donor funded programmatic activities often means that a CSO gives scant attention to Governance issues. This has led CSOs to neglect the strengthening of their internal governance mechanisms in a sustainable manner.

It cannot be assumed though that there has been chaos, anarchy, lack of some order, or an absence of forms of Governance. Much of the Community Based Organisations are built on traditional social structures and frameworks and these are the entities that form the bedrock of most of the CSO constituencies. Changes in this structure include the introduction of Governance benchmarks by the development partners, corporate and financial governance frameworks that guide the proper use of funds and resources within programme and financial contracts. This introduced compliance and standards framework is new and is tied to Aid money. The Aid money and the dominant development infrastructure is the dominant level of operation in our Pacific regional framework that Hauofa refers to. This section examines the State of Governance and CSOs within different contexts in the Pacific region. It also looks at the regional and sub-regional collaborations. Where are they particularly strong? Where do they exist and if they indeed do exist? Is there a need to look at sub-regional collaborations and partnerships?

27 See Mohanty M, "Informal social protection and social development in Pacific Islands countries: Role of NGOs & Civil Society, Asia Development Journal Vol 18 No.2

28 For example, see section 2 of the Fiji Charitable Trusts Act which defines "charitable purpose" from the education of (physical, mental, technical or social) of the children of the poor or indignant, the employment and care of discharged criminals to such other purpose as may be declared by the Minister to be a charitable purpose.

State of Governance and CSOs at the thematic level

Pacific CSOs engage in a spectrum of development issues which is largely influenced by the CSO's purpose as articulated in its constitution. Of the 2 quantitative indicators under OCAT, 8 of the 23 CSO partners worked in thematic areas issue. These are:

- Democratic governance
- Women's rights, mainstreaming gender equity and equality
- Women and economic justice
- Community development
- Social justice
- Climate change
- Peace and security
- LGBTQI Issues
- Self determination
- Disaster response and resilience
- Post military occupation adaptation
- Atomic energy and radiation threats to people and environment
- Blue Economy - sustainable and responsible development of the pacific resources
- Native land use and ownership
- CSO capacity strengthening
- CBO support
- Youth and development
- Traditional leadership and development

It is important to note that SDGs are a focus for every CSO in the Pacific as it now governs resource mobilisation efforts at the national, regional and international levels.

Some CSOs are engaged in these issues as a result of or in combination of the following reasons: country's national development plans, country's political landscape or international instruments to which the country (where the CSO is based) is a party to. Issues could have largely been donor driven or have been placed on a regional development agenda by regional and international Organisations tied to funding. Fundamentally the thematic leads have found that influencing remains an important measure of their success. The more the public responds, the more discussions generated, and more voices is raised on an issue. This means that the CSO has achieved an important first step of highlighting the issue for public, government and national and even regional or global attention. The next important step in the influencing process is to be clear as to what the awareness achieves and how it shapes or changes policy at the national regional or global levels.

The Regional CSO Diplomacy Strengthened Regional Meeting convened by PIFS brought in 40 CSO participants. This included INGOs, regional CSOs and national Thematic CSO leads. They identified 4 thematic priority policy areas: (i) Increasing population movements, (ii) Economic progress, (iii) Human security and (iv) Governance.

PIFS also called for creating new diplomacy that aligned with government and private sector agendas and further identified thematic priority areas to include youth entrepreneurship, women's financial inclusion, migration and finance in respect to climate change, regional policy on effective border control and the support for indigenous people's rights.²⁹

²⁹ www.forumsec.org, Civil Society Diplomacy Strengthened Regional Meeting, 29 March 2018

Observations

Climate change is a thematic area which has featured prominently in the national and regional agenda. This theme provided an umbrella Pacific CSO through its regional and international networks to engage in the international climate change policy space. It is fair to say there are some cases where a CSO's access to State funds would have reduced its ability to criticize state policies and actions. However, one national CSO in the Melanesian region noted that despite one of its Board members being a government official/ ex-officio, (and the CSO having internal governance challenges), the national CSO was able to influence public policy discussions on behalf of its members in law that addresses domestic violence. This CSO was instrumental also in reinstating the tabling of a Bill that dealt with corruption which was originally withdrawn.

The effectiveness of the programme implementation in addition to the awareness it raises has its own challenges as one partner in Fiji found. The income generation, the volume of work in the community empowering mothers, wives, single mothers and women meant that productivity rose. With increased productivity, the volume of cash generated from the enterprise also increased. The ceilings that demarcate small business from large scale based on levels of income and expenses meant that regulatory measures and compliances kicked in, taxation, audit, financial reporting requirements; and stricter Board provisions and other declarations needed attention.

One national CSO identified **peace and security** as its core mandate. The Organisation was able to identify gender and human rights as cross-cutting issues which were captured in its strategic plan. That CSO raised that "peacebuilding" was viewed as lacking accountability in terms of its nature and scope. The CSO had difficulty in engaging with CSOs who undertook work using a Human Rights and Gender lens.

For some CSOs, the internal challenges with Governance impacted the nature of their national and regional engagement with other CSOs. The inability or failure to comply with donors and the national regulatory frameworks meant they were unable to access donor funds. They resorted to engaging in an informal manner with other Organisations that worked in Women's Human Rights issues on a range of thematic issues such as Women in leadership.

Furthermore, the more established CSOs were able to use their community networks to leverage and mobilise support on key national development issues such as Violence against Women. These more established CSOs are based in a Pacific country's capital. The style and approach of advocacy was raised by one CSO as a source of subtle disagreement. However, the willingness of CSOs to share and learn from experiences on a range of matters augured well for the wider informal group of women's CSOs and the CSO in question.

Two CSOs respectively from the Polynesian and Melanesian regions made it clear that their Strategic Plans recognised and required that respectively the peace building and community development work be expressed as cutting issues, that is, it affects all aspects of their work. A few CSOs alluded to these themes in some of their documentation. The umbrella national CSO in the Polynesian region noted that their Strategic Plan will undergo revision to better captures these concerns.

Through key organisational documents such as a clearly articulated and executed Strategic Plans, skillfully navigating and relying on networks as well as persistence over time, Pacific CSOs demonstrated the state of Governance.

State of Governance and CSOs at the sub regional level

Melanesian region

Generally, in the Melanesian region, the state of Governance for CSOs has produced mixed results. Despite the challenging political landscape and restrictions placed on CSO engagement in specific areas of national Governance in some countries, the CSO sector is considered vibrant in advocacy, policy development and implementation processes³⁰.

Governance challenges in CSOs in the Melanesian region are tied to personal integrity, competence and the exercise of courage³¹, Gender and cultural practices such as exercising silence, and close relationships which negates the proper management of conflicts of interests are challenges. Ignoring questions pertaining to best practice in Governance appears to have infiltrated CSO spaces, and permitted to grow and exist as ‘elephants in the room’. Where recognition and mention are made of these, the attempts have thus far been lackluster with little follow up action. This was particularly evident in some older national umbrella CSOs.

The Indigenous culture of “Big Man”³² has marred the ability of CSO Boards to engage constructively on pertinent Governance issues and general complacency has led to Governance challenges that have solidified. This has created a tough structure that will require collective will and energy for some CSOs to address in the future.

One of the strong defenders of sub-regional partnerships who value relational partnerships is Vanuatu. It is therefore logical that the Melanesian Spearhead group is based in Port Vila. The Ni Vanuatu recognize the Melanesian relationship that ties the Solomon Islanders, the Kanaks, the Bougainvilleans, and Fijians as they hold to the slogan voiced by the late Sir Walter Lini: “Vanuatu is not free until all of Melanesia is free.”

One of the RPV’s follow-up influencing work with the Vatu Mauri Consortium was to support the influencing forum for Pacific self-determination. This event was held in Vanuatu chaired by VMC pillar lead for traditional leadership, the Mal Vatu Mauri. The forum drew in representation from East Timor, Bougainville, the 2 Kanak factions in New Caledonia, the Ni Vanuatu and the representatives from Oscar Temaru’s Tahiti’s self-determination group.

Fiji, regarded as Melanesia, has a slightly different narrative as it is a pretty heterogeneous society and does not share the homogeneity of other sub-regions.

For influencing purposes, the Fiji CSOs have access to the regional Organisations who provide access to the international global spaces of advocacy and influencing. The engagement dynamics in the CSOs in Fiji is mainly along thematic areas. The Women’s groups will see collaboration between Women’s Organisations. This was evident during the lead up to the development of the 2013 constitution and the 2014 elections. The Women’s groups formed one collective— the National Women’s Forum.

Women’s groups’ collaborating action in political advocacy with the purpose of shaping opinion, informing constituents and influencing policy through a broad-based approach included research, study, national reviews to open letters, press conferences and events such as that witnessed in the 16 Days of Activism to name only a few. The Women’s Groups were involved in all facets of national issues including Violence against Women, disaster, LGBTQI and coordinating and participating in many of the human rights conventions shadow reporting processes.

30 Mohanty M, “Informal Social Protection and Social Development in Pacific Island Countries : Role of NGOs & Civil Society; Asia Development Journal Vol 18, No.2 December 2011.

31 Zora J G Custom then & Now : the Changing Melanesian Family in Jowitt A & Cain T N Dr (eds) “Passage of Time: Law, Society and Governance in the Pacific, pp 95

32 Big man leadership is a type of leadership in the Pacific region where a big man acquires status via the demonstration of certain skills and the distribution of wealth. See footnote 5

The CSOs in Fiji do not necessarily acknowledge or work closely with the CSO umbrella Organisation because of their ability to implement their work without support from the current assigned umbrella Organisation. Furthermore many of the CSOs have access to resources, are in spaces of significantly more sophisticated organisational models, and have access to international platforms forged by their own work without the need to rely on current umbrella CSO.

Solomon Islands draws a slightly different narrative. It is a politically savvy country and the umbrella CSO has a strong working relationship with its CSO partners. The umbrella CSO Development Services Exchange was set up in 1984 to facilitate and coordinate development services for CSO. It has a membership of 65 members. The government does not have any specific CSO regulatory legislation but all CSOs are registered under the Cooperative Societies Act (1953) or the Charitable Trust Act (1964). All Cooperative Societies Act registered members must produce annual financial statements except for the ones registered under the 1964 Charitable Trusts Act.

Government and CSOs in the Solomon Islands have a somewhat difficult relationship, described as “beset with friction and misunderstanding”³³ This is especially on issues when CSOs disagree with decisions and positions taken by government. A recent disagreement on government’s decision to shift allegiance from Taiwan to the People’s Republic of China drew a CSO’s wide petition to government to terminate the partnership. The government swiftly responded to the petition signatories that many of them were defaulters in their registration, could face deregistration or investigation at worst. This is one of the many events where CSOs and government have clashed on issues.

33 Civil Society brief, Solomon Islands – Asia Development Bank

34 Dr McLeod A (April 2007), Literature Review of Leadership Models in the Pacific; Targeted Research Papers for AusAid; accessed at http://bellschool.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/2015-12/SSGM_ResearchPaper_Pacific_Leadership_07_0.pdf

35 Asian Development Bank Civil Society Briefs : Tonga; 2015 accessed at <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/177184/csb-ton.pdf> on 1 April 2021

36 See footnote 29

Polynesian region

The Polynesian region is predominantly patriarchal with hierarchies³⁴. With chiefs, monarchy, traditional royal households and noble classes, they continue to exert power and control over the masses. Having a voice has changed over time, as people not of noble birth are able to speak freely, without fear or favour³⁵.

Overall, the civil society sector in the Polynesian region has been described as “robust and active”³⁶. Similar to the Melanesian region, relationships are considered important which can both be an enabler and hindrance when it comes to the Governance of CSOs.

In a national umbrella CSO, the inability of the AGM to recruit diverse and inclusive Board members of CSO as mandated by the CSO’s constitution was visible. For example, a former CSO staff member became a Board member which, to some extent, undermined the role of the new CSO leadership and his or her ability to manage the daily operations of the CSO.

Another national umbrella CSO noted that given that the CSO has received grants from government meant that the State demanded scrutiny as to how the grant funds were expended. The scrutiny of the CSO from State should be viewed as a positive thing as CSOs access money from government coffers and therefore should account for how State funds were expended. However, this remains one of the current challenges CSOs face: that of needing funds to carry out its mission while remaining free of the State’s control. This is a source of contention and criticism wherever it occurs, and this is not a feature unique to Polynesia.

It is also not possible to determine a distinct behavior that speaks for CSOs in Polynesia. They do not share the same level of sub-regional collaboration as their Melanesian counterparts do. The setting in Tonga is also very different from Samoa and Tuvalu. Samoa though has the Samoa Civil Society Support Programme that coordinates all civil society funding under the Ministry of Finance. This is managed by a Programme Management Unit where development partners, the government

and SUNGO work collaboratively to determine which programmes to support and to identify which CSO the support would be granted to. At the same time the SCSSP provides capacity strengthening support to SUNGO and the CSO partners so that they can better manage and implement their programmes supported by the grants.

SUNGO's OCAT assessment was accepted by SCSSP as a fair assessment of Governance.

Micronesian region

Geographical isolation, diverse island cultures within countries, and the challenges of distance and communication are identified as challenges in CSO formation, operation and management. National representation at Governance levels do characterise CSO Governance in the Micronesian region.

The CSO sector in Micronesia largely relies on volunteers which has both positive and negative impact. On one hand volunteerism speaks to the strength of community and passion that pervades the region. However, this has also severely hampered the effective of Governance of a CSO.

While it is important for communities to have representatives as members of CSO Boards, this is rare and remains a challenge in isolated Micronesian atoll communities. One key informant CSO shared that most of its Board members were based in the outer islands with their own set of priorities. Due to their remoteness, constant re-scheduling of meetings occur. Donors and its members alike were not satisfied with the state of governance affairs. With the appointment of the new CSO, the person's primary responsibility on becoming its leader was to repair and rebuild working relationships with member CSOs, government and donors, as well as work on Governance issues and deliver on its specific programmatic activities.

The Micronesia CSO context varies from country to country. The Northern Micronesian States aligned under the USA Protectorate and operated differently from the Central Pacific islands of Kiribati. The Federated States of Micronesia have separate governing entities per island, a governing structure similar to the United States. So for the programme, the Chuuk Youth Council was a member of the Pacific Youth Council. The Republic of Marshall Islands have an umbrella CSO body, the Marshall Islands Council of NGOs which was established in 2003. The RPV programme worked with REACHMI (Radiation Exposure Awareness Crusaders for Humanity Marshall Islands), strengthening the Governance structure, developing the finance management processes, and reviewing the constitution. The RPV also helped with the development of their strategic plan and support for staff and procurement of basic office equipment.

With Kiribati, the support was pretty much uniform right across NGOs. It included training and procurement of licence to access Accounting Software MYOB, review of the constitutions, development of strategic plans, assistance for the Organisations to undertake their Annual General Meetings to present financial reports, and assistance with their strategic plans. The reviewed constitution also mobilised and revived their Organisations. One of the CSOs a thematic lead, went one step further and translated the OCAT into the iKiribati language, and undertook OCAT in iKiribati with their CSO and CBO partners.

State of Governance and CSOs at the regional level

Pacific Islands Forum is a state member organisation that took a closed shop approach to engaging with CSOs. However, this usually tense relationship was reinvigorated through various Forum Secretariat processes which eventually led to the Pacific Forum Leaders and CSO Dialogue. These events became an annual side event in 2017, where both regional and national CSOs could dialogue with Pacific Leaders on pressing regional priorities and issues.

Since 2017, regional CSOs, faith-based umbrella Organisations and some national CSOs have participated in the Pacific Leaders Forum. This has led to the amplification of the voices of CSOs on pertinent regional Governance issues in a more organized and strategic manner.

There are 2 prominent regional CSOs in the Pacific region. They represent several national umbrella CSOs, some with a Memorandum of Understanding. These regional CSOs are perceived as active and successful and their access to regional Governance architecture was largely premised on its working relationships between Civil Society Organisations, regional bureaucrats and high-level political decision makers at the regional level. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has established a formal accreditation process for national, national umbrella and regional CSOs to engage in its policy architecture.

A key informant CSO recognised the value of engaging in such regional policy architecture by being part of the regional CSO vehicle. However, one partner regional CSO had financial accountability issues which was being addressed. A key informant CSO recognised that the regional CSO vehicle had its internal Governance challenges which were currently being addressed, albeit at a steady pace. By the same token, the key informant CSO recognised the value of regional CSOs relying on their national umbrella CSOs to advocate for regional policy implementation at the country level and ensuring that their actions were couched in the rule of law, Human Rights and Safeguarding.

Further, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat had its own processes which can be cumbersome for CSOs wishing to engage in to influence those spaces. One regional CSO saw the value in engaging directly in the international policy space rather than through the regional policy architecture.

It is clear that regional CSOs and national umbrella need to better socialize their respective memberships on the regional policy architecture, and use their national pool of experts to progress regional and national policy initiatives.

Ideally if all the CSOs had their houses in order, and focused influencing strategies and objectives, the regional influencing framework will work to effectively to translate issues at local level to national and regional levels, ultimately creating the policy changes that address the key development issues to benefit the people.

Effectiveness of CSO and partnerships, with government?

One of the current challenges that CSOs face is the need for funds to carry out its mission whilst at the same time remaining free of State control. This is often a source of contention and criticism wherever it occurs. Perceived political allegiances can also influence the effectiveness of CSO and Government partnerships. One of 2 prominent national umbrella CSOs in the Melanesian region was able to maintain their working partnership with Government due to that particular national umbrella CSO's perceived political allegiances. A national umbrella CSO in the Polynesian region on the other hand was able to retain its partnership with government, despite its public announcements that the Government of the day should adhere to the one China policy.

One key informant CSO shared that the inability of the CSO to comply with regulatory requirements which meant their access to use State funds was under State scrutiny. Another key informant CSO's strong Governance mechanism enabled it to access State's funds related to climate change and communities. One national umbrella CSO in the Polynesian region was able to partner with Government of the day in the delivery of services as mandated under the country's National Development Plans and recent SDG VRN report.

For one national CSO in the Melanesian region, its application of the "remora mechanism", that is, aligning itself with the government of the day saw its internal governance suffer. However, this CSO continues to leverage its history and standing to engage in public policy spaces and in specific national CSO fora.

There are differing views on this matter. Some believe that there are benefits in working closely with government, while others believe it is better to have some space to hold government accountable yet keeping partnerships and engagements cordial and open at all times.

This debate emerged when one Melanesian CSO wanted to consider pushing for legislation that would recognize them as an entity. There was reservation that by legislating their Organisation, their activities and membership in return for formalization of their work would have implications. Working closely with the State would provide access to resources and places of influence, but the CSO would lose their independence and would be operating at the behest of government.

Effectiveness of CSO and partnerships, with donors?

There appears to be uneven and complex result when it comes to the effectiveness of these CSOs and their partnership with government.

Financial sustainability of a CSO through international or States sources of funds are essential to sustain the relevance of the CSO sector, and its ability to represent and amplify the voices of marginalised and often underrepresented communities.

Except for 2 key CSO informants; a national umbrella CSO from the Polynesian region and a national CSO from the Melanesian region, the remaining 6 CSOs from Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia were unable to access donor funding for programmatic activities. The most common reason was due to weak Governance of those CSOs; their failure to comply with regulatory requirements; an absence of governance mechanisms, policies and practices.

However, it is worth noting that for a key informant CSO from the Micronesian region, that CSO were able to secure core funding from a foreign donor for the CSO leader, despite its Governance challenges including the irregular filing of annual returns and audited financial accounts.

On the whole, it appears that donors, especially in the Micronesian region, are willing to fund event-only activities, specific projects or specific CSO positions rather than core related and programmatic activities of these CSOs. Perhaps this is the only option left to donors that recognise the need for and value of CSOs in the region.

SECTION 11. EFFECTIVENESS OF REGIONAL CSOS AT THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL, INFLUENCING SUPPORT AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WITH THEIR NATIONAL PARTNERS

The RPV programme partnered with 2 very distinct regional entities. We qualify the use of the term entities because one of them was a collaboration of regional Organisations forming the Pacific Regional Non-Governmental Organisations (PRNGO) Alliance and the other a Pacific Islands Climate Action Network known as PICAN. Both of whom are active members of the PIFS NSA network. PICAN is an influencing network that has active country representation operating across the Pacific. These are known as Climate Change Thematic

Civil Society groups. The programme undertook OCA with 2 of their national partners KiriCAN (Kiribati) and SICAN (Solomon Islands) and similarly with PICAN. The network has a very strong, large youth constituency who are also active members of the Pacific Youth Council.

In a publication on regional influencing platforms by Oxfam in the Pacific, the levels of correlation between the influencing partners from local to global can be best illustrated in the following:

Figure 7: Regional Influencing Framework: Handbook Oxfam in the Pacific



The current Regional Influencing Framework afforded to the Pacific CSOs is best illustrated above. If one is to work within the real and active institutions such as PIF, there is the need to align the existing work to processes.

In the diagram above, not all spaces are open to CSOs. However, the seats that are offered at the table does not limit the CSOs from exercising their influencing campaigns, and to apply the advocacy methodology which many of them have become very good at.

The spaces allocated are into the Working groups. They are provided to a select few, who sit there on behalf of their larger thematic constituencies. The other space is at the Regional and International NGOs spaces where CSOs work through the consultations. This is usually coordinated by the team that works with the Non State Actors.

The logical influencing pathway from local to global depends on several key elements. Relationships is a key element. This connection is between the local community. It is represented by the Community Based Organisations, the thematic CSO leads, the national umbrella CSOs and the regional CSOs. These interlinks are real, active and healthy throughout the full chain of actors. Another important component is that the strategic objectives are aligned and coordinated instead of being random and selective.

CSO partners have the stories and realities, credible voices, and leadership and Governance that lends strongly to their messaging. The credibility of a campaign can be thwarted if you have the wrong people and non-credible CSOs at the podium. The spaces afforded are spaces of privilege and there is a responsibility that comes with having these privileges

RPV PROGRAM AND REGIONAL CSOS – KEY LEARNINGS

PRNGO Alliance

Apart from strengthening Governance capacities of the national CSOs, the RPV programme also was focused on strengthening the capacities of the regional CSO Partners. This included the PRNGO Alliance whose membership is outlined in Section 2. The deliverable for the work with the alliance was to strengthen its capacity for regional influencing policy development. This was to be built on the undertaking of a research on a chosen theme and from which a campaign to influence policy was to be identified and launched.

In March of 2021, the PRNGO alliance launched the global campaign on Deep Sea Mining drawing from the alliance's analysis of the full Blue Economy and Green Line concept. In that journey, the alliance initially undertook the development of their strategic plan, namely the Mataniciva plan, followed by several meetings to identify the influencing theme for research, which eventually settled on the Blue Economy. The research focus on Blue Economy is in 3 countries, namely Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. This was accepted by the alliance as 3 country Technical Report. The discussion and analysis was needed to be driven by the alliance, to consider the body of work already in progress by members on the Blue Economy. The research would also include broader development concerns which included alignment to strategic areas including the Mataniciva plan.

The programme supported the process throughout the entire steps taken by the alliance and with it undertook an OCA. As an Alliance, much of the Organisational Governance Assessments really did not apply. However, it did flag the need for the Organisation to have clearer processes of communication that would contribute to strengthening their capacity to develop influencing policies.

The significant learning lay more with the programme, which acted the role of grantee, overreached its sphere of control, failed to negotiate a clear partnership agreement and held onto programme delivery elements. It was also a complicated space as relationships were tense and memories of broken historical bridges were reignited. It was clear that the values in relationship needed to be rebuilt and this was addressed in several frank tense but honest discussions that resulted in the programme and the alliance negotiating and agreeing on a way forward.

Another key learning from this experience was that the Pacific CSO influencing space ties in the local to regional and global spheres and there was responsibility that comes with the privilege that is afforded. It was equally important to clarify, discuss and talanoa issues that impacted on relationships. The quality of the relationships will strengthen the quality of a development effort due to these efforts.

PICAN Experience

The PICAN experience emerged from within the Oxfam in the Pacific space, as the Regional Coordinator was housed with the team's climate change team. The climate change team worked closely with the networks that included 2 Melanesian partners.

As part of the PICAN's planning objective, it was considered that they undertake an OCA that would help them revisit their structure and also see if there were organisational Governance gaps to be addressed.

The OCA process challenged the team to critique and relook at the organisational structure they were currently working with and examine the network of national CSO partners who were engaged in campaigns at the national, regional and global levels. This also included embedding the synergized national learnings, experiences and realities into advocacy campaigns, including voice of the youth, and using the media and social media frameworks to broadcast their messages. PICAN had access to the NSA space at PIFS, at COP meetings globally finding support and assistance and access through their membership into the global Climate Action Network. This is a worldwide network of 900 NGOs across 100 countries who are organized by regional and national nodes.

The OCA area that they eventually focused on was on Influencing as this theme was their core business. The processes for developing and fundraising for campaigns, identifying possible partnerships that they could exploit included the private sector, which had held at arm's length.

The programme extended its work with PICAN by undertaking an OCA with their national nodes SICAN and KiriCAN, addressing issues of organisational and financial Governance in their Strategic Plans. Both had similar issues and one of these bodies needed to strengthen the capacity of their CBO partners. It involved introducing the partners to basic organisational structures, organisational behavior of conducting meetings, and record keeping. For those CBOs engaged in fundraising, they were to develop processes that would protect and strengthen their financial governance at the most basic levels.

SICAN and KiriCAN were active with the youth and they could mobilise youth groups who were responsive in national campaigns on climate change. In a way, PICAN's strength across the region was that it had an active constituency working across the region.

Regional mobilisation for resources and policy positioning with the collective action of Pacific CSOs have played key roles in several frameworks. This included Women's Rights as articulated in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration, and the 2050 Blue Pacific Continent framing and strategy development.

CSOs have also represented the Pacific in global movements and mechanisms addressing women and girl's Human Rights, Climate Change policy and action; migration and finance.

Regional CSOs have been and are critical to leveraging and mobilising coordinated support, resources and technical assistance for national CSOs, with the focus to build institutional capacity, implement and manage their service delivery to their issue-based clients, particularly on VAWG and gender equality.

One regional CSO which was mandated to work on climate change policy and advocacy has been able to make significant inroads in policy advocacy at international forums. The flexible arrangement and openness of the collective CSO to work on regional and international public policy in climate change have enabled it to evolve organically.

SECTION 12. CHANGING PARADIGMS - NEW CSO VOICES AND THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The OCA experience presented a different perspective on the state of Pacific CSOs which emerged from the assessments analysis, and the processes undertaken by the programme. It also identified new engaging partners. Beyond the assessment of organisational and financial Governance, the influencing priorities, the new constituencies, and new players and actors. It provided the space to examine the continuum of issues that expand on the usual Pacific development challenges that we have broadly accepted as specific to our context.

This section will look at some of the new players and the emerging development challenges that reflect that there is a changing paradigm.

The OCA experience in the RPV programme in the 9 countries provided a glimpse into the second level whom Epeli Hauofa identifies—the people, whom the consultants and the experts tend to overlook and misinterpret in their work because they do not fit in the prevailing views about the nature of society and development by those in dominant positions.

While the dominant actors have not changed, the people through the national and regional CSOs are still finding spaces to raise their voices. With these spaces operating beyond the existing paradigms, CSOs are holding national governments accountable, holding each other accountable and holding international powers accountable. This is in addition to the internal challenges which include Governance structures, their finances, relationships, leadership and regulated spaces of work.

The next section will look and provide short observations on some of the changing paradigms, the new voices in the region and the current development challenges.

CHANGING PARADIGMS

The current global pandemic COVID-19

- The global economic downturn and general observations have led to radical changes in how CSOs do business. Programme implementation has changed, meetings are convened online, and where lockdown is or has been in place, administration and management have become skeleton working teams. Many people who were contacted have gone into No Cost Extensions.
- At programme level, the work with the communities have not changed, except that social and root issues of poverty, violence against women and vulnerable groups have increased. Governments are struggling to provide support for basic infrastructure. CSOs have engaged in agriculture, fishing and reverted to strengthening the subsistence frameworks to allow for families and communities to put food on the table.
- Education and training at tertiary level has paused and there is no longer employment in the formal sectors.
- A few of the Fiji partners during Covid have reverted to supporting the awareness raising for communities. Some have undertaken audits of the hardships faced by communities and businesses have moved to online platforms to allow business to flow.
- COVID-19 has completely tested the frameworks of support by the experts and consultants and completely leveled it out. While we have been looking at Non Communicable Diseases, Maternal and

Child health, and Communicable Diseases in the Pacific, the experts had failed to properly prepare for a global health pandemic such as COVID-19.

Strengthening CSO governance is an effective way to raise its relevance and remain a credible voice in democratic spaces

- Demand for accountability of CSOs by governments will necessitate strengthening their internal Governance mechanisms. Otherwise, it may result in the closing down of a CSO by the regulator as sanctioned by the national enabling legislation.
- The section on the case studies and the conclusion drawn from the OCA experience is pointing very much to the lesson that CSOs can work more effectively and efficiently if they get their houses in order by addressing issues of organisational and financial governance.

Use of the media and social media platforms by national CSOs is also effective to counter the shrinking spaces for CSOs

- Increasing media and social media platform restrictions placed by Pacific governments will hinder the CSO's ability to engage on thematic issues such as rule of law, national governance and accountability, which will in turn adversely impact its influence in the public policy design and implementation processes. A clear illustration is the Solomon Islands Government's decision to ban Solomon Islanders' access to FB.³⁷ Note other Pacific countries like Nauru has banned citizens' access to FB for 3 years. This was lifted in January 2018.³⁸ Samoa had also considered the idea of banning their citizen's access to Facebook³⁹.

- The PICAN experience as an active climate change network of influencers illustrate as to how effective media and social media platforms are in raising awareness

Information Technology innovation matters when strengthening CSO governance

- In light of the global pandemic, COVID-19 and travel restrictions, there is a growing use of technology by Pacific country citizens. These factors may see national CSOs operate virtually. Therefore, strengthening the Governance mechanisms of CSOs such as Board meetings, access to and use of financial statements using virtual platforms will become critically important in strengthening their Governance policies and processes.
- The RPV programme has converted the OCAT and Safeguarding Manuals for Online Distance and Flexible Learning mode. The Training of Trainers with the CSO partners was also completed.
- Many other CSOs are convening their workshops virtually using available Information Technology frameworks.
- With travel and face to face meetings paused for many of the Pacific countries, information technology cloud based applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Face Time, Messenger and Viber are used to connect Partners.

³⁷ See <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/solomon-islands-aims-to-ban-facebook/> (accessed on 2 January 2021)

³⁸ See <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/349319/nauru-lifts-facebook-ban> (accessed on 3 January 2021)

³⁹ See <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/solomon-islands-aims-to-ban-facebook/> (accessed on 2 January 2021)

CSOs will be required to collaborate and cooperate in consortia or larger amalgamations

- Due to shrinking donor funds in the Pacific region, most donor funds are being channeled to government agencies, multilateral agencies and regional institutions like the Pacific Community (SPC) and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. CSOs will be required to collaborate and cooperate in consortia or larger amalgamations for a specific issue and or a specific timeframe.
- In this regard, Governance and financial reporting will need to align to international transparency standards and this will necessitate recruitment of specific skill sets.
- At the same time, shared services between CSOs may be the new mode of procuring management services by several CSOs. A Hub or panel of advisors offered and shared virtually may be the way to go.
- The OCA observed in some of the countries that CSOs were co-sharing spaces such as housing other CSOs at one location, sharing on rental, water, electricity costs and even sharing standard office equipment such as copiers and computers. This is not an uncommon phenomenon as in office incubators and virtual office spaces in many other countries.

New programme Focus areas

- CSOs have begun to revisit their strategic focus areas and included disaster response and resilience work, revisiting their approach to preposition supplies which may not be limited to post natural disaster, but to include pandemics and health considerations.
- Faith groups in Tonga and Vanuatu are looking to develop DRR policies. Through their capacity for mobilization, these groups are playing an active role in preparing pre-positioned supplies, establishing logistics and management of the movement of supplies from central Headquarters to many locations. Churches will start to work together to consolidate their efforts. Psychosocial support and shelters will also start to become a service provided by church groups. In addition, churches will start working with other entities to coordinate and facilitate the extension of assistance in cash and kind to the affected communities.

CURRENT NATIONAL UMBRELLA CSOS ISSUES

Strengthening national umbrella CSO governance is an effective way to raise its relevance and remain a credible voice in democratic spaces

- Similar to national CSOs, national umbrella CSOs must strengthen their internal Governance so that they do not lose credibility with their members and remain legitimate voices in the policy design and implementation process.
- Regional CSOs are also to some degree responsible in actively supporting the strengthening of partner CSO and CBO governance as in the case of KiriCAN and SUNGO. Both regional CSOs translated the QCAT into the indigenous languages to allow them to roll out their own Governance strengthening within their CSO and with partners.
- In the same vein, Umbrella CSOs may start to look at how they can engage with their members and to scope for new membership opportunities.

Technology matters when strengthening CSO governance

- Technology has become even more important given the global pandemic. It is essential that a national umbrella CSO keeps abreast of these technological advancements so that it is reflected in the use of virtual platforms. This can be used to conduct regular Board meetings, staff interactions, and financial monitoring to ensure its internal Governance is strengthened.

Engaging with vulnerable groups such as youths and the LGBTQTI community is imperative

- For some national umbrella CSOs, expanding their membership remains a challenge. It is critical that a national umbrella CSO takes proactive action to engage with the wider community. This includes youths and the LGBTQTI to ensure their organisation is in touch and is responsive to the lived realities of the wider community.
- The presence of Gender Identity CSOs in Tonga and Kiribati represent a change in the attitudes towards sexual minorities. They are not a new constituency as they have existed in the Pacific since time immemorial. There are countries where the church has little or no tolerance for their existence. Laws in most Pacific countries consider their choices and their lifestyle illegal. Fiji has accepted, acknowledged and protected the LGBTQTI in Fiji's Constitution under the Bill of Rights.
- The Tonga Leiti Association has survived in spite of the highly intolerant Church. Champions like Joey have strongly advocated for their recognition and has created a space to provide shelter and support for the number of transgender communities in Tonga. She has fought and worked hard for their rights, finding alliances in the right places. Apart from the church, they are a part of the traditional and customary environment social setting, playing specific roles in the household and the community. In the development of the Kiribati BIMBA Strategic Plan, the group noted that while they were occupied with fundraising, they look to establish a centre and to provide the support for their members. They were equally interested to be engaged and involved in national development initiatives as they saw themselves as potentially capable of adding value to community development work because their members are educated, skilled and already in the workforce, across the various sectors. The LGBTQI community have existing locally, regionally and globally networks with Women groups and Youth groups.

CURRENT REGIONAL CSOS ISSUES

Reliance on regional CSOs

- Where civil society spaces are shrinking or being challenged at the national level, national CSOs will need to rely more strongly on regional CSOs. Therefore, strengthening the Governance mechanisms of members of national umbrella CSOs and their apex regional CSOs requires urgent priority and action.
- Local and Community Based Organisations depend on the regional Organisations (who are privileged to have access to seats at the table) to advocate for the people's issues being raised at the national, regional and global spaces.
- Organisational Governance, financial Governance and approaches to engagement and the quality of the relationships should go beyond cliques and personal friendships.
- Holding each other accountable.

Regional faith-based Organisations may be the platform to expose and or progress controversial regional issues

- Regional faith-based Organisations may become the vehicle or the platform to expose and or progress controversial regional issues. Again, the Governance mechanisms of faith-based Organisations will need to be strengthened.
- Understanding that faith groups are diverse in nature and differ theologically in their founding principles mean that some countries may see 2 groups, the traditional faith groups under the first wave of Christian movement to the Pacific, as well as the new evangelical Christian churches. This was evident in 2 countries.
- Faith groups have a far reaching, diverse and multi-sectoral areas of work in health and education. They also have women's and youth arms, who are active and highly resourced and well connected.
- Faith groups also have influencing and political clout and have members who are in positions of power.

A classic example is the Pacific Theological College's (PTC) Institute of Mission and Research (IMR). This institute provides research, publishing and strong virtual conferencing sessions in the pre-COVID and during the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic period. They released 3 regional publications which have been endorsed by the Pacific Island Forum Leaders. Another example is the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) who is involved in climate advocacy, rule of law, and environment work. PCC has been a key advocate at the Pacific Leaders Forum and CSO dialogue since 2017.

SECTION 13. PACIFIC CSOS AND THEIR CROSS-CUTTING WORK WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO GENDER JUSTICE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

While the broad governance challenges of CSOs in the Pacific region have been the primary focus of this Report, it is equally important to examine the role of Pacific CSOs and their contribution to gender justice and inclusive development goals and the challenges that CSOs have encountered.

In Section 8, the Case Studies reflected the gender justice and inclusive development goals were moving towards intersectionality, and development issues need to encompass race, class, gender and ethnicity.

GENDER JUSTICE

Seven informant CSO's work mandates focused on women's rights, climate change, LGBTQI issues and peacebuilding. Two CSOs focused on a range of development issues as this was determined by its members who were largely community based CSOs.

It appears that the combined organisational and staff capacity of a Pacific CSO have produced mixed results when it comes to the achievement of gender justice and inclusive development goals. Some of the reasons put forward was that this theme was strongly insisted by donors and development partner. There was little ownership by the CSO Board and thus the inability of the CSO to systematically integrate these goals into the programmatic activities. This is a governance challenge which is a focus of this Report.

For some CSOs in the sub-regions, the approach has been to form informal working relationships with well-established, professionalized and larger CSOs to advocate for policy issues on Gender Justice.

At this juncture, it is important to raise the use of concepts by the Pacific CSO sector: the use of "gender justice" and "inclusive development goals". These concepts may be familiar in the international CSO sector. However, this is not so in community and grass-roots driven Organisations in the Pacific. "Inclusive development goals" tend to be used more by Pacific CSOs who are regularly engaged in the national, regional and international policy architecture. Gender equality or equity and inclusive development goals is intersected into Sustainable Development Goals, human rights and poverty alleviation. It is useful in gauging the levels of understanding of these concepts which will vary and is often subject to debate amongst and within Pacific CSOs. For grass roots communities – that is in remote and rural locations, these concepts are seldom, if ever, utilized. There have been significant inroads made by Pacific CSOs as it concerns gender justice and inclusive development goals.

INCREASED AWARENESS OF GENDER JUSTICE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

There appears to be widespread awareness amongst Pacific CSOs about the critical importance of gender justice and inclusive development goals. For 2 key informants, these goals are part and parcel of their CSO's programmatic and governance work.

For some key informant CSOs, advocacy and forming alliances on the issue of Violence against Women is regarded as a human rights violation. Therefore, it was important to work in these themes despite their CSO's governance challenges. One key informant shared that the CSO helped advocate for a key legislative framework alongside other women's CSOs.

The work on Gender has been integrated into most of the Pacific CSO's specific projects and programmes has to some extent produced mixed results. Women's economic empowerment and women in leadership are featured prominently in the Pacific CSO sector's policy reform agenda.

SOME CSOS IN THE PACIFIC REGION ARE LED BY WOMEN

The growth of the women's movement and or feminist movement has gained momentum in the Pacific region. For example, some of the longest running CSOs are led by women and they are based in Fiji. Some of these Pacific CSOs have relied on their history and significant contribution to the women's movement. This has enabled them to engage in public policy debate and discussion, notwithstanding their governance challenges.

Strategic focus on gender justice and inclusive development goals

Generally, there appears to be a high commitment by Pacific CSO's to work on promoting women's rights. However, difficulties pertaining to critical analysis capacity and information resource sharing remains. Often this is necessitated by donor requirements which again raises questions about ownership as earlier mentioned.

A CSO's foundational document is its Constitution which defines its mandate. The Strategic Plan breaks down the CSO's mandate into 3-5 year cycle of achievable goals. This is aligned to national and global development goals which determine its resource mobilization efforts, human resourcing, communications and annual scope of work toward achieving the Organisation's mandate.

However, according to some of the key informant CSOs do not have a Strategic Plan, or are in the process of developing a Strategic Plan. Others are currently working with an expired Strategic Plan, with a view to reviewing it which can undermine the strategic focus of the Pacific CSOs as it concerns gender justice and inclusive development goals. Governance challenges have further compounded this issue as it has further placed a spotlight on the capacity issues that a CSO faces from a governance and programmatic perspective.

SENSITIVITY TO CONTEXT AND CULTURAL CONTRADICTIONS UNDERMINE THE PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER JUSTICE AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

A common criticism of donor funded programmes is that they are not contextualised to absorb cultural nuances and practices of countries. Often programmes are designed without local ownership, and projects are donor driven. Such a project is for a specific purpose and must operate within a specific timeframe. If and when consultations are conducted in preliminary stages of a project or programme design, local recommendations are often ignored or there is a disregard for lived realities. Despite numerous programme and project-evaluations consistently highlighting the importance of local contextualization, recommendations are put aside.

UNINTENDED OR INTENTIONAL PRIORITIZING SEGMENTS OF DIVERSITY

Another challenge that faces Pacific CSO is the segment of the community it should prioritise in its programmatic areas of focus. In the Pacific region, CSOs focused on gender, disability, and youth often at the expense of the aged and LGBTQBTI issues which has slowly gained visibility and priority in the past 10 years.

In relation to gender, a justification is that women represent 50% of a country's population and therefore gender should be accorded priority. This can be considered as an over-simplification of the gender issue as it does not take into account the intersectionality or multiplied layers of discrimination encountered by Pacific Islanders due to their gender, ethnicity, age, race, sexual orientation and religious beliefs.

ABSENCE OF LEADERSHIP

Gender or diversity issues may not be acknowledged let alone implemented, if the CSO Board or CSO leader or both lack the courage or is not sympathetic to issues to ensure it is mainstreamed in all aspects of the governance mechanisms and programmatic work of the CSO.

In the Pacific region, which is largely a patriarchal society, the status quo can undermine or prevent a CSO's work in the realization of the gender justice and inclusive development goals. Persons of traditional authority who are Board members are required to dialogue and or engage with diversity segments which is often challenged by fear of the unknown; or that it may threaten their personal belief system. This in turn has impact on the work of the CSO.

ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE TIMING AND QUALITY OF GENDER AND INCLUSIVE CAPACITY BUILDING

Challenges concerning the irregular and quality capacity building in these areas were raised by some key CSO informants.

Usually, the CSO staff who participate in training for gender and inclusive capacity building are either middle to lower management of the CSO. Ownership by the Board and senior management of these issues is difficult to ascertain. In some instances, the use of foreigners and incongruous training methodologies was considered inappropriate to the mandate of the CSO and the context in which they operate in.

One of the most difficult issues, CSOs have to contend with in the Pacific (in both rural and urban contexts) is the sluggish rate of understanding, appreciation and support for feminism and feminist ideals. This largely runs contrary to many Pacific cultural and staunch Christian values. These were further reinforced by recent contemporary American prosperity -gospel values and ideals. This poses a serious impediment to the progressive practice and achievement of actions and wins toward gender justice and inclusive sustainable development.

SECTION 14. CONCLUSION

The OCA programme has shown that the approach to strengthening CSO governance cannot take a singular and empirical approach to fixing specific areas. The financial or organisational governance indicators require not only organisational assessment, but increasing diverse considerations that influence the behaviour of the Organisation.

The assessment conclusions on the state of play is not viewed as attrition. Instead, the assessment values the stages of growth that is accomplished. The way forward as a sector, organisational-membership-Constituency is wide engagement to bring forth the commitment to change. The inclusion is for the intersectionality in development from the angle of organisational development.

The paradigms of working with Pacific CSOs have shifted, players have changed, issues have evolved and the spaces for influencing are now accessible and no longer driven by experts, consultants and bureaucrats. The approach would be to empower the existing frameworks, and the CSO architecture that is working, and to address the issues of organisational and financial governance as responsibilities.

The influencing work by the Pacific CSOs are effective and strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency should be the focus. CSOs in the Pacific do not need to be defined as great event campaigners but can be considered poor managers.

The work on CSO capacity strengthening has been in the making for many decades and the approach, analysis and the decisions on the way forward will vary. The report provides an insight to the journeys of the CSOs in the 9 countries, the dynamics at play in the assessment exercise and the lessons learnt in the whole process.

The OCA results on the surface pretty much reiterates the current understanding of the state of CSOs. However, it is in the stories in how the CSOs work on their influencing issues alongside their governance challenges where we need to question our positions, our responsibilities and our decisions on the way we engage and work with Pacific CSOs as partners.

We can continue to repeat the same mistakes by adopting the same old approaches when entering into partnerships with our Pacific CSOs with the same old assumptions. If so, we have to understand that Pacific CSOs will be held at ransom for their governance realities. That 2 level paradigm that Epeli Hau'ofa describes has to be bridged to move forward. These Pacific CSOs have the tenacity to persist, exist and resist as they explore the forums and spaces for influencing unwavering and determined. We really require understanding the Pacific context, the surrounding vocabulary and the Pacific peoples to engage as equal partners jointly accountable for the interventions to go into the future.

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES AND EXCERPTS FROM THE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL KIT

Our capacity development approach has two phases:

1. Assessment of CSO organisational capacity, using an organisational capacity assessment tool (OCAT). This assessment is validated with the CSO and potential priorities agreed.
2. Development of an organisational capacity development plan (OCDP) using the priorities as a starting point.

Phase 2 is covered in a separate guide. Both phases aim at deepening engagement of national partners and promoting constructive dialogue among key stakeholders in the capacity assessment process.

D. THE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. THE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL

The organisational capacity assessment process involves the use of the Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) shown in section D. This tool provides a framework for assessing what stage a CSO has reached in key areas of organisational functions that are critical for CSOs to become inclusive, transparent, accountable and effective. The functions are:

- governance,
- management,
- human resources,
- finances, and
- collaboration and influencing.

Each of these is made up of a number of elements that are required if the function is to be effective. For example, the elements of the governance function include governance structures and how constituency voices are reflected in governance structures.

The function of collaboration and influencing is linked to the Raising Pacific Voices programme focus on strengthening civil society organisations' institutional and influencing capacity. 'Influencing' refers to the systematic efforts to affect policies, laws and regulations (and their implementation), budgets, company or governing practices, attitudes, beliefs and power relationships in such a way as to promote social justice. As such, this OCAT is designed to assess the organisational minimums for advocacy,

3. HOW TO USE THE OCAT

In order to facilitate an objective view of the CSO being assessed, the OCAT should be used by individuals who are not connected with the CSO. The process consists of the following steps:

- (1) a review of key documents (where these exist);
- (2) face-to-face interviews or focus group discussions with board members, staff (if any), members and volunteers. The OCAT includes questions that will assist the assessors to identify where the organisation stands in terms of the key functions and dimensions;

- (3) following these conversations, the assessors independently rank the CSO, providing reasons for the ranking;
- (4) the assessors then come together to discuss these rankings and agree on a joint ranking and potential priorities; and
- (5) these findings are then presented and discussed with key members of the CSO, such as the board and senior staff or members.

Because the OCAT statements provide ‘pictures’ of organisations at different stages of growth, they can also be used to stimulate discussion with CSO board members and staff about what the organisation could look like in the future. This assists with planning and prioritisation (Phase 2).

The length of the assessment process and the time required to conduct it will vary depending on the size of the organisation. Our experience is that small organisations may require one day to review documents and conduct interviews, and two days for ranking, feedback, discussion and agreement on priorities. Larger Pacific CSOs may take up to a week.

STEP 1: DOCUMENT REVIEW

Prior to conducting interviews and discussions with the CSO, key documents should be collected and analysed. This may take up to two weeks.

The following documents should be requested:

- constitution, by-laws or other legal documents;
- registration document;
- strategic plan;
- any documents describing the organisation, explaining its governance and key staff roles;
- annual report;
- audit report;
- organisational policies; and
- organisational procedures and manuals e.g. HR, finance, procurement.

STEP 2: FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

Face-to-face interviews should be conducted by a team of at least two assessors using the OCAT questions. At least two board members, including the chair of the board and treasurer should be interviewed. There are explanatory notes provided for each function and element of the OCAT. These notes provide the rationale for each set of questions but they should not be read out during the interview. Assessors should use their understanding of the notes to tailor the OCAT questions where appropriate. Detailed notes should be taken of the responses, as they will be used to provide the ranking (step 3). If the CSO has an office, interviews should take place there, as this will allow staff to be consulted or additional documents to be readily reviewed.

STEP 3: RANKING AND DISCUSSION

Based on the answers provided during the interview, each assessor should provide their own ranking against the 1–4 scale. Assessors will need to exercise judgement in deciding on a ranking as it is unlikely that an organisation will correspond directly with every ranking description provided. A documented justification should be provided for the ranking. Once the assessors have done their individual rankings, they should meet to discuss them and decide on a consensus ranking and recommendations for areas to be prioritised for capacity development. The assessors should prepare a presentation for providing the consensus ranking and recommendations to the CSO.

STEP 4: PRESENTATION AND AGREEMENT





The rankings and recommended capacity development priorities should be presented to the CSO, discussed and any feedback recorded. Consensus should be reached with the CSO on the ranking and prioritised activities. This information should be documented. It will be used to develop the CSO’s capacity development plan.





1.0 GOVERNANCE





The governance of CSOs is undertaken by a body that is responsible for ensuring that the organisation is working towards its stated objectives and that it is operating within the law, within its policies and budget. Where the organisation has staff, the board holds those managing the organisation to account for organisational performance. Beyond legal requirements, the board is expected to act in the best interests of the whole organisation, not in the best interests of any particular individual or group. This governing body may have different names, including board, committee or council.



STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
1.1 THE PURPOSE OF THE CSO Every organisation is established for a purpose. This is usually documented in a constitution or a mission statement. The constitution is usually the first document that authorities will review to determine if a CSO is eligible to be registered. It goes further than a mission statement, setting out the responsibilities of the board, the executive and the members. The document provides the framework for steering the CSO, and for inspiring and motivating volunteers, staff, members and donors.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the purpose of the organisation? Is there a constitution or other document that sets out the purpose or mission of the organisation? Do staff and members of the board know the purpose or mission of the organisation? How is the constitution, purpose or mission used by the board? When was the last time these documents were reviewed? 			
	There is no clear or collectively held purpose or mission for the organisation.	A constitution, or documented purpose or mission statement exists but there is limited awareness of what this is.	A constitution, purpose or mission statement exists, which all board members agree on and are able to articulate.	Board members regularly refer to the vision or mission to guide decisions. All the activities of the CSO are aligned with the vision or mission.

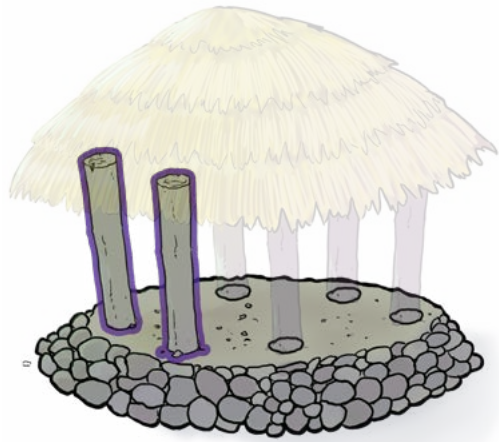
STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
1.2 REGISTRATION Registration is the process of obtaining legal authorisation for an organisation to operate. There are different categories of registration (e.g. incorporated and unincorporated) and these entail different obligations.	1. Is the organisation registered with the relevant local authority/authorities? If yes, which ones? 2. If not registered, why not? Are there any plans to register? 3. If registered, are there any legal requirements that your organisation must meet? If so what? (E.g. annual reporting). 4. Have you had any challenges meeting these requirements? (E.g. Filing annual reports, etc.). If so, what? 5. If not registered, to whom does the organisation report on what it is doing (activities, finances, etc.)?			
	The CSO is not legally registered.	The CSO has started the process of registration but this is not yet complete. The CSO has made a reasoned decision not to register and this is not the appropriate time, given the current aims and circumstances.	The CSO is legally registered but does not or is unable to consistently comply with reporting requirements.	The CSO has registered and consistently complies with reporting requirements. The CSO is not registered but communicates regularly with its key stakeholders (e.g. members, funders, key target group) on what it is doing and on its financial status.
1.3 GOVERNANCE OF THE CSO The governing body of a CSO steers the organisation. It helps it to stay focused on its mission while meeting its legal obligations. It ensures that the organisation has the resources required to deliver on its mission. It does this by making policy, appointing the chief executive officer (where the CSO has staff) and approving the CSO strategy and budget. It ensures that an organisation is properly managed and that risks are identified and managed, including preventing fraud and ensuring that safeguards are in place to prevent exploitation and abuse. Where an organisation is registered, the members of the governing body can be held legally accountable if things go wrong.	1. Is there a board/governing committee/council? 2. What is the role of this body? 3. Who are its members? 4. What are their roles and responsibilities? 5. How did they come to understand these? [e.g. Are there ToRs? Is there an induction programme for board members?]			
	There is no board.	Members of the board understand and agree on the key governance roles and responsibilities of the board. The board meets only when important decisions need to be made.	Leadership for particular governance functions is clearly allocated amongst board members and these members understand their responsibilities (e.g. the treasurer is responsible for finance, reviews annual budget and recommends approval). The board meets regularly.	There are clear ToR's for key board positions. Board meetings include regular reporting, review and discussion on assigned roles and responsibilities. There is an induction programme for all new board members.





STAGES	PLANTING 	SEEDLING 	MATURING 	HARVESTING 
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
1.4 CONSTITUENCY OF THE CSO Which group(s) of people does a CSO seek to benefit or speak for? These are its constituents. Without a clear understanding of who its constituents are, what their lives are like and what their concerns and aspirations are, it will be difficult for the organisation to support positive change for that group. This group is best placed to advise on these issues, so it is important to involve them in the CSO's work, particularly in planning its work and making decisions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who does the CSO seek to benefit or represent? What does it seek to do for this group? Are any of these people involved in the organisation? How? (E.g. through involvement in management, decision-making or governance of the CSO) If no involvement of this group is required, except as beneficiaries, explore if and how the CSO knows what the needs and interests of this group is. 			
	It is not clear or there are different understandings of who the constituency of the organisation is.	The board is clear and in agreement on who the constituency is. Constituents are mainly seen as recipients of CSO services.	The board has a good understanding of the CSO's constituents. Constituents are consulted but not engaged in decision-making.	Members of the constituency are involved in managing or governing the CSO.
1.5 CSO GOALS AND STRATEGY If the mission of a CSO describes the CSO's ultimate 'destination', then what needs to be done to reach it? Goals provide a specific focus for CSO work. There should be goals for different areas, e.g. for the services it provides, for fundraising and for influencing. The plan for reaching these goals is the CSO's strategy. Goals and strategy help to provide direction to the CSO, to keep it on track, to organise work and allocate resources. They are important tools to support CSO effectiveness and accountability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What long-term goals does the organisation have? How are these goals used by the board? Is there a plan to achieve these goals? How was this plan developed and who was involved? How is this plan used? By whom? Is this plan reviewed? When? Who is involved? 			
	The organisation has no Long term goals.	There are organisational goals & strategy, but the process for developing it was not participatory – may have been designed by a few Board members.	There are organisational goals and a clear strategy in place to achieve them. The board regularly refers to goals and strategy for guiding its decisions.	The organisation has clear goals and strategy developed through a participatory process. The board uses the strategy to monitor organisational performance; the strategy is regularly reviewed and periodically adapted.
1.6 PROCESS OF MEMBERSHIP OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE Recruitment of board members is a critical task to ensure the board has the right mix of skills needed to fulfil its role. The most common method for recruitment of board members is election by peers. The board should develop a board member job description that articulates a profile of skills, experiences and attitudes the board is looking for, and expectations of board members, including role, performance and minimum commitments (time, meetings, committees, etc.).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do people usually become members of the board? What happens when a board position becomes vacant? If elections occur, when / how often does this happen? Is this a requirement of the constitution or by-laws? [Review of constitution and bylaws] 			
	Appointment to board positions is by existing board members without any consultation or validation with other key members of the organisation.	Board members are appointed, based on clear rationale and justification that key members have accepted.	Board members are elected but there has been no election in the last five years.	Elections for the board are held at least once every five years and the constitution makes provision for this.





STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
1.7 BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY As the governing body for a CSO, it is important that a board properly documents its decisions and communicates these to its members and staff.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which important matters or decisions has the board discussed/made in the last few months? How are these decisions documented? [Review board reports/minutes if available.] How are these decisions communicated? [Review emails/newsletters.] 			
	No documentation of board meetings and decisions made.	Inconsistent or ad hoc documentation of board meetings.	Board decisions are documented but available only on demand.	The board records all decisions and these are readily available and communicated to members and staff.
1.8 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ORGANISATION Financial sustainability of an organisation is important, as it speaks to the viability of a CSO to stand on its own feet, without any external donor support.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the annual cost of running the organisation and delivering its activities? (I.e. what is the budget?) Who funds the organisation? Who are the main providers of this funding? In what form? (E.g. community donations/contributions, government grants, etc.) Which are short term (e.g. one-off donations or less than a year of funding), medium term (more than one year but less than two years) or long term (more than two years)? Does the CSO have an approach or strategy to ensure its financial viability (i.e. ensure that it has enough money or/and resources to continue delivering on its mission and strategy)? What does this strategy involve? Who is responsible for it? Have fundraising targets been set? If so, are they being met? What challenges does the CSO face in funding its work? 			
	Little or no thought has been given to fundraising. The organisation relies on one-off donations from members or the community and this hampers the organisation in achieving its mission.	The board recognises the importance of fundraising but it is done on an ad hoc basis.	The board is aware of organisational income requirements and has allocated leadership for fundraising to specific individual(s).	The organisation has fundraising targets in place and a diversified strategy for meeting them is being implemented. Revenue covers at least one year's core operating costs.

2.0 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

What combination of functions needs to be in place for a CSO to deliver on its mission? A clear organisation structure will identify what those functions are and what human resources will be required to lead and deliver these functions. It helps to organise work, allocate responsibility for that work, provide clarity about this and thus minimise duplication and wasted resources. It is an important tool to support organisational effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability.



	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
STAGES				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
2.1 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE An organisational structure identifies the key organisational functions, who leads these and who they manage. This is most clearly represented in a diagram, an 'organogram'. This is an important tool for identifying who is accountable for what in the organisation. The organisational structure should be periodically reviewed to ensure that the organisation continues to have the right roles to deliver its strategy.	1. What are the key positions in the CSO? 2. What functions are these positions responsible for? 3. Are these positions responsible for managing others? Are these arrangements documented? How? 4. Are there any functions that are needed for the CSO to deliver on its mission but which are lacking? Which ones? Why are they needed and why are they missing?			
	No organisational structure	An organisational structure exists but staff are not clear what this looks like and/or whether there are overlapping or duplicate roles.	The organisational structure and accountabilities are clearly documented and publically available. The organisational structure is missing one or more functions required for it to deliver its strategy.	Staff understand the organisational structure, key roles and accountability relationships. The structure contains all the key functions required for the CSO to deliver its strategy.

STAGES	PLANTING 	SEEDLING 	MATURING 	HARVESTING 
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
2.2 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES Policies and procedures set out expected standards for the CSO and provide guidance on how to meet these expectations. New staff should be oriented to policies and procedures and they should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant as the organisation changes and grows.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Is there any written guidance for members or staff to help them understand how the CSO expects them to do their work?2. What kind of guidance (prompt policies, procedures)3. What areas of work does this guidance cover?4. How does the CSO ensure that this guidance is followed? <p>There are no policies or procedures. There does not appear to be much recognition of their usefulness.</p>	<p>There are a couple of policies in place but no process for inducting/ orienting staff on them.</p>	<p>There are policies and procedures that cover most key areas but there is no process to ensure that these are embedded into the CSO's ways of working.</p>	<p>Policies are in place, and the CSO has processes and resources to support staff to apply them.</p> <p>Policies are periodically reviewed to check that they remain relevant.</p>
2.3 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW CSOs need to reflect on whether they are achieving their mission and if the work they are doing is having an impact on their constituents. They need to investigate if their strategies are working and if not, why not. Organisational review and learning processes accomplish this.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does the CSO assess or review its work? How often?2. What aspects of the CSO's work does this cover? How is the assessment/review done? Who is involved?3. How are the findings of this assessment / review used? And are they communicated? To whom and how? <p>No organisational assessment or review.</p>	<p>Organisational review not conducted on a periodic basis. Review recommendations not implemented.</p>	<p>Organisational review conducted but not independent and not inclusive, participatory or comprehensive.</p>	<p>Reviews conducted regularly, recommendations communicated and implemented.</p>

The full OCAT is available on the Pasifika Rising website:





<https://www.pasifikarising.org/organisational-capacity-assessment-guide-for-pacific-civil-society-organisations/>

APPENDIX 2: SAFEGUARDING ASSESSMENT

6.0 SAFEGUARDING





Safeguarding must be an integral part of operations when dealing with children, women, youth and vulnerable groups, particularly in the communities that the organisation works in. This means that when instances or allegations of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or all forms of child abuse arise, it becomes the duty of the organisation to investigate these safeguarding incidents and ensure that there are sufficient and effective mechanisms available to allow for the proper reporting and investigating of these incidents, and that comprehensive referral services are available. A safeguarding framework must have the ability to develop and maintain a reporting system that handles cases appropriately, designating the correct outlets and support networks for the individual and community. It must also ensure that the organisation has a set of robust safeguarding preventative mechanisms that significantly reduce the risk of a safeguarding incident from occurring whilst also empowering individuals to speak up if they face an incident of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse.











STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
6.1 WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING? Safeguarding policies are recognised as mechanisms which are in place to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse. Implementing this is an important aspect for CSO operations as most to all activities involve the community or marginalised groups. In the case of a safeguarding incident, a safeguarding policy ensures that there is awareness of the organisational procedures and national laws (where applicable) to follow.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is a safeguarding policy for your CSO? 2. Who might this policy protect? 3. What issues does this policy cover for your CSO? 4. Do you have any other existing policies which outline child protection and/or prevention of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse? If yes, then does it need to be amended to introduce improvements to the policy? 			
	There is no policy which aligns to protecting children, women, youth and vulnerable groups from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse.	There are policies being developed, however, it doesn't clearly outline protection of individuals from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse.	There is a specific policy for the protection of individuals from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse but it does not specifically cover safeguarding principles like "zero tolerance" and "survivor-centred approach".	There is an effective policy in place that addresses the issue of the protection of children, women, youth, and vulnerable groups from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and child abuse. It is accompanied by safeguarding principles that are core to a successful policy on safeguarding for the church. The policy is periodically reviewed by independent assessors.





STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
6.2 CODE OF CONDUCT It is standard practice that all incoming staff and non-staff personnel be given a code of conduct that explicitly states the moral and ethical guidelines that uphold the values of the CSO to which staff and non-staff personnel must hold themselves accountable. Given the necessity of a safeguarding policy, it would be ideal to reflect the principles of your safeguarding policy in the code of conduct.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assuming that the organisation has a safeguarding policy, are the principles of that Safeguarding Policy reflected in the code of conduct? 2. How comprehensive is the safeguarding provision in the code of conduct? Does it cover all people, particularly children, women, youth, and vulnerable groups? 3. How is the safeguarding provision in the code of conduct developed? Who is involved in its development? 4. Is the partnership agreement inclusive of a code of conduct which states norms, responsibilities and attitudes when faced with an allegation or report? 5. How does the organisation ensure that the code of conduct and its safeguarding provisions are accurately communicated to incoming staff and non-staff personnel? 6. What are some tactics that the organisation can use to ensure that staff and non-staff personnel follow the code of conduct particularly its provision on safeguarding? 			
	There is no safeguarding provision in the code of conduct.	An awareness of the need for the protection of children, women, youth and vulnerable groups from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and child abuse is coherent to all stakeholders, staff and non-staff personnel but this is not included in the code of conduct.	The code of conduct contains a brief section on the need for safeguarding but does not expound on other necessary information such as the nature of the reporting process and the duty of stakeholders, staff and non-staff personnel in regard to safeguarding and reporting procedures.	The code of conduct contains a detailed section on safeguarding and related information. There is also an explicit clause in the contract requiring incoming staff and non-staff personnel to ensure that they exercise due diligence and responsibility in regards to safeguarding concerns and issues. The code of conduct also makes references to mandatory induction and training process that have sessions dedicated to safeguarding, among other things.

STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
6.3 PREVENTION AND PROTECTION Prevention and Protection aims to set procedures which tackle any form of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and child abuse before or after the situation. Prevention methods are in place to set moral and ethical values that deter any forms of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and child abuse. Protection procedures on the other hand aim to offer systems which ensure that individuals subjected to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and child abuse are not victimised. Both mechanisms are in place to ensure that even before or after the situation; there are procedures in place to determine the level of care and sensitivity to be afforded to the individuals subjected to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and child abuse. None of this is possible if staff and non-staff personnel are not continuously trained particularly on the importance of prevention and protection in relation to safeguarding. Staff development initiatives for safeguarding ensure that they continue to have the skills necessary to deliver on their safeguarding strategy.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Does the organisation have a safeguarding policy which has explicit provisions for the prevention and protection of individuals from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse? Does the organisation have a strategy for further training and development of the designated person(s) for safeguarding? Does this also extend to other organisation staff and non-staff personnel? Does the training include ensuring that staff and non-staff personnel are able to recognise early safeguarding issues? Is there training in place to ensure that staff and non-staff personnel respond appropriately to safeguarding issues? Does the organisation have a risk assessment in relation to safeguarding? 			
	<p>There isn't a designated person(s) looking after safeguarding in the organisation and/or there isn't a safeguarding policy that has provisions for preventing and protecting individuals from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse.</p> <p>There are no trainings and awareness-raising on the importance of establishing prevention and protection measures in relation to safeguarding.</p> <p>There are no risk assessments in relation to safeguarding.</p>	<p>There is a designated person(s) looking after safeguarding in the organisation and there is a safeguarding policy but it does not have provisions for preventing and protecting individuals from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse.</p> <p>There are training and awareness programmes on the importance of establishing prevention and protection measures in relation to safeguarding but these are not regularly conducted.</p> <p>The church has established risk assessments in relation to safeguarding but these are inadequate.</p>	<p>There is a designated person(s) looking after safeguarding in the organisation and there is a safeguarding policy which has provisions for preventing and protecting individuals from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse.</p> <p>There are training and awareness programmes on the importance of establishing prevention and protection measures in relation to safeguarding and these trainings are regularly conducted, however, only certain staff are selected to attend these trainings.</p> <p>The organisation has established risk assessments in relation to</p>	<p>There is a designated person(s) looking after safeguarding in the organisation and there is a safeguarding policy which has provisions for preventing and protecting individuals from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse.</p> <p>There are training and awareness programmes on the importance of establishing prevention and protection measures in relation to safeguarding and these trainings are regularly conducted. They are also conducted for all staff and non-staff personnel, and they are available to organisational partners who request it.</p>

STAGES	PLANTING 	SEEDLING 	MATURING 	HARVESTING 
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
The organisation should also recognise that risk assessment processes are part of prevention as they assess what kinds of risks are likely to spring up from the organisation's activities and documenting how these will be mitigated. These risk assessment matrices should be reviewed and updated regularly			safeguarding but these only identify risks and do not consist of ways to address identified risks.	The organisation has established risk assessments in relation to safeguarding to identify risks and ways to address identified risks. It also recognises safeguarding risks that may occur within the confines of the church or the communities it works in.
6.4 REPORTING PROCESSES Reporting processes dictate the correct procedure to deal with a case appropriately. This can mean instilling a system where allegations and reports have a domino or chain effect that designates the right people for the case. Directing victims to the right people and outlets that are specialised for allegations or reports. By developing a reporting system, it gives the survivor and community relief that their voices are being heard.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a designated person(s) for receiving and addressing issues of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse? 2. How is this designated person(s) chosen? 3. How is the designated person(s) for safeguarding trained? Do they have additional access to a manual or document to help outline their functions and points of information? 4. Is there a clearly outlined procedure for reporting sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or child abuse to other parties? (Senior management, child protection/sexual exploitation hotline, hospital/sexual services, the police, etc.). 5. Does the organisation link to any existing national mandate/law to report sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse and if so, how is this process merged with the organisation's process? 			
	There are no mandatory reporting processes developed for safeguarding issues (or for breach of the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct).	There is a structure and process for reporting safeguarding issues for individuals, however, there are no clear procedures for response, including for victim assistance and referral for safeguarding issues.	There exists reporting and response procedures and mechanisms, including for referrals to services, but these are inadequate.	There exists adequate procedures for reporting and response in relation to safeguarding, including victim assistance and referrals, as well as clear roles and responsibilities of designated officers in this process. There is a designated officer who follows through on allegations especially





STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
				where legally required and a support system that separates the individual from the community where appropriate. There is also a degree of transparency in the reporting and the responding although confidentiality and the safety of the survivor is still prioritised. There exists complaints and reporting mechanisms that are safe, confidential, transparent, and accessible to children, women, youth, and vulnerable groups.
6.5 TRANSPARENCY Issues of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse are serious, and therefore need to be treated with high priority by the organisation. Maintaining the individual's privacy throughout the process is a necessity, particularly if the media and law enforcement are involved. A CSO has the responsibility to investigate these matters and refer them to appropriate authorities with respect and confidentiality. This in turn maintains the privacy of the individuals, communities and organizations involved, while also ensuring that the matter is appropriately investigated and responded	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is the individual's confidentiality being maintained while also ensuring their allegations are accurately and appropriately investigated? 2. Are there policies on this? If not, then how would policies be developed to ensure the protection of the individual's identity? 3. Are there incident management processes in place to minimize the impact on funding and reputational damage, whilst fulfilling donor reporting requirements? 4. Are their case details enclosed to the media/public? If yes, how is this being controlled? 			
	There aren't any policies which protect the individual's identity and regulate case facts.	There is a policy which aims to protect the identity of individuals who have been subjected to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse. However, the policy merely	There is an organisational policy which contains clauses that briefly describe the standard of confidentiality when reporting, investigating and addressing cases of	There is a clear organisational policy which contains clauses that comprehensively describe the standards of confidentiality when reporting, investigating

STAGES	PLANTING 	SEEDLING 	MATURING 	HARVESTING 
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
to. Transparency also requires reporting to donors to keep them informed of the way that the organisation is addressing the issue and the measures it aims to take to prevent issues like this from occurring again.		affirms the importance of this, it does not actually provide clear outlines for how the organisation can do this.	sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and all forms of child abuse. The policy, however, does not provide guidance on donor reporting requirements nor does it have guidelines on how best to minimize the impact to funding and reputational damage.	and addressing cases of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse. The policy provides clear guidelines on how the organisation should deal with media interest. It also provides clear guidance on donor reporting requirements, and how best to minimize the impact to funding and reputational damage.
6.6 PSEA While PSEA might refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, it is good practice to include sexual harassment in its scope. All persons have the right to life free from sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse where sexual abuse includes sexual activity with children. It is important to recognize that all forms of sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse are built on structures of unequal power dynamics, both within organisations and in relation to the people that the organisation serves. Embedding PSEA core principles into an organisational policy recognizes the risk of people within the organisation exploiting their position of power and privilege for personal gain.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there key terms in your policy which determine the difference of harmful acts? i.e. (sexual harassment, exploitation and sexual abuse) 2. What are these clarifications? Do they implicitly or explicitly explain the degree of harmful nature in the policy? 3. Are there procedures/ punishments in place to hold the subject of a complaint accountable? 4. Does your current policy cover the following areas that relate to sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acts of gross misconduct that are grounds for termination of employment - Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) - Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex - Sexual relationships between staff and beneficiaries - Staff and non-staff personnel must report concerns regarding sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse by a fellow worker. - Staff members, especially those in leadership positions, are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse. 			
	There is no policy relating to the prevention of sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and sexual abuse.	The organisation has a PSEA policy but it only references sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The	The organisation has a PSEA policy which explicitly outlines the need for the prevention of sexual	The organisation has a PSEA policy which explicitly outlines the need for the prevention of sexual

STAGES	PLANTING 	SEEDLING 	MATURING 	HARVESTING 
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
Subsequently, such a policy also recognizes the need for the organisation to protect the people that it serves and those within the organisation from instances of sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and sexual abuse. It also acts as an organisation's commitment to supporting survivors, improving its safeguarding capacity, and preventing, protecting, reporting and investigating instances of sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and sexual abuse.		policy does not define or differentiate between important terms. For instance, it does not define nor differentiate sexual exploitation with sexual abuse.	exploitation, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse. The policy however, does not have a comprehensive set of guiding principles. For instance, it might not cover sexual relationships between staff/ non-staff personnel and beneficiaries and the unequal power dynamics that could form as a result. It might not also fully identify the expectations of those who work for the organisation or are engaged in the delivery of its work.	exploitation, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse. The policy has a comprehensive set of guiding principles that cover a wide range of issues. The policy has a comprehensive glossary that sets to define important terms like sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse and the differences between such terms. The policy also accurately identifies the expectations of those who work for the organisation or are engaged in the delivery of its work.

STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
6.7 INCLUSIVENESS Protection of all individuals in the organization is an important ideal for women, children, youth and vulnerable groups – particularly those who have had a history of marginalisation. In order to protect members of the organisation effectively, particularly those that fall under marginalized groups, there must be explicit statements which protect all marginalized groups from any form of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and child abuse. It should also be the organization's duty of care to serve the community regardless of their identity when it comes to cases of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and child abuse. Hence, the need for an understanding of inclusiveness during the development of procedures and policies. It is also good practice to, with the help of the constituency, develop accessible reporting mechanisms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When it comes to safeguarding issues, who does the organization seek to benefit and who does it seek to protect? 2. Does the constituency play a role in decision-making or governance when it comes to safeguarding? 3. If the constituency is largely excluded from making decisions on safeguarding, how does the organisation know what the needs of the constituency are in regards to safeguarding? 4. Does the organisation's policy/code of conduct/ guiding principles explicitly explain protection for marginalized groups like LGBTQI+ groups, people with disabilities, children and women? 5. What are the processes and procedures in place that are inclusive of all marginalized groups? 6. Are there training/ workshops/ meetings offered that shed awareness on the inclusion of all marginalized groups and the importance of protecting them from safeguarding issues? 			
	There is minimal to no statements which include all marginalized groups other than children and women.	There is a safeguarding policy which implicitly states the need for inclusivity.	There is an effective safeguarding policy which protects all marginalized groups with a general awareness from all stakeholders and decisionmakers. This awareness is gauged and improved on through regular training on the importance of inclusiveness to safeguarding.	There are procedures and trainings offered to staff and non-staff personnel, and even partners (when they request it) which informs all stakeholders of the importance of inclusivity for protection from any type of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse. Training on the importance of inclusivity to safeguarding is conducted regularly.

STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
<p>6.8 CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY</p> <p>In any case regarding sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and all forms of child abuse, consent must be introduced to ensure that the individual is aware of their decisions. This includes consent for sharing information, consent for establishing the correct procedures to ensure the perpetrator is dealt with and also to give consent for reporting the incident to third party agencies. Levels of consent may differ depending on the setting. Some settings may require communal consent or consent from an elder. Regardless, the principle for safeguarding against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse is that consent is personal to the survivor</p> <p>Introducing the aforementioned different levels of consent means ensuring that survivors of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and child abuse are aware of the procedure for reporting, and how information relating to the safeguarding incident is documented, shared and stored.</p> <p>Furthermore, it should be remembered that while it is necessary to obtain consent for cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (which by definition deal with adults), it is encouraged but not necessary to obtain the consent of a child and/or parent or guardian when dealing with cases of child abuse. This is in line with the safeguarding</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are there various levels of consent? (i.e. consent for sharing of information, consent of following through with set procedures, consent of involving other third-party support systems)? 2. How is consent for reporting incidents carried out? (i.e. written, verbal) 3. If the individual is under the age of 18, how do you offer support? 4. Does the consent of a minor or individual need the approval or parents/ guardians or the whole community (village)? 5. Are there any support systems in place if the survivor of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse chooses not to report? 			
	There no mandatory consent policies which outline the need for permission when presented with an incident.	Consent is sought but the reporting process has so many intermediary stages, and people handling the safeguarding case, it loses its element of confidentiality.	There is a process of obtaining consent from survivors of sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse (and child abuse, where possible) before engaging in the process of reporting. There are genuine steps taken to ensuring confidentiality although these come with limitations. For instance, the organisation may take steps towards ensuring that as few people as possible are involved in the reporting process so as to ensure maximum confidentiality at that stage, however, this may weaken with the way that the safeguarding information is stored and how securely it is stored.	There are procedures and policies that ask for consent from survivors of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse with every step taken. When dealing with cases of child abuse, the organisation ensures it tries to obtain the consent of the child and/or parent or guardian while still recognising that it must follow through with reporting even if obtaining consent from the parties mentioned is not possible (unless this may directly endanger the child in which case the principle of "best interests of the child" is applied and alternative measures are sought). The number of people tasked with dealing with each case is reduced to only those that absolutely need to be involved. This ensures the highest level of

STAGES	PLANTING	SEEDLING	MATURING	HARVESTING
				
INDICATORS	1	2	3	4
principle of “best interest of the child” and the mandatory child abuse reporting laws that exist in several Pacific island countries. However, if reporting to a particular authority will clearly put the child in danger, (for instance, if the alleged perpetrator works for the police) then the reporting may be postponed or delayed until a better course of action can be identified, again with the best interests of the child in mind as that is always the paramount consideration.				confidentiality. Information is also stored securely with separate processes for the physical and online storing of information related to safeguarding concerns. Consent is also sought for the use and sharing of personal information like photos and videos.

APPENDIX 3: AN EXAMPLE OF A FULL OCAT ASSESSMENT REPORT THAT CAPTURES THE FULL RESULTS DRAWN FROM THE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

WOMEN IN FISHERIES NETWORK FIJI



ORGANISATIONAL capacity assessment (as at OCTOBER 2020)

The **Women in Fisheries Network - Fiji's (WIFN-Fiji)** mission is to facilitate networks and partnerships to enable opportunities for women to be informed about all aspects of sustainable fisheries in Fiji, and to increase the meaningful participation of women in decision-making and management at all levels of sustainable fisheries in Fiji.





Between 28th - 30th October 2020, the **Shifting Power Shifting Voice (SPSV)** project under Oxfam in the Pacific, did partner with the **Raising Pacific Voices** project (also under Oxfam) to convene a workshop focused on conducting an **"Organisational Capacity Assessment"** for all SPSV project partners. SPSV Partners invited to participate in the workshop included: the **Women in Fisheries Network Fiji (WIFN-Fiji)**; **Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF)**; the **Pacific Center for Peacebuilding (PCP)**; the **Partner in Community Development Fiji (PCDF)**; and **Rise Beyond the Reef (RBTR)**.

Throughout the 3 day of workshop, a **self assessment of the SPSV Partners organisational capacity** was facilitated by members of the RPF team. The self assessment conducted utilised the **"Organisational Capacity Assessment Guide for Pacific Civil Society Organisations"** (the OCA Guide) developed under the RPF project. The OCA Guide lists 5 key components as being essential for a CSO to be **"Inclusive, transparent, accountable & effective"**, being **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE & MECHANISMS**; **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT**; **HUMAN RESOURCES**; **FINANCE**; and **COLLABORATION & INFLUENCING**.

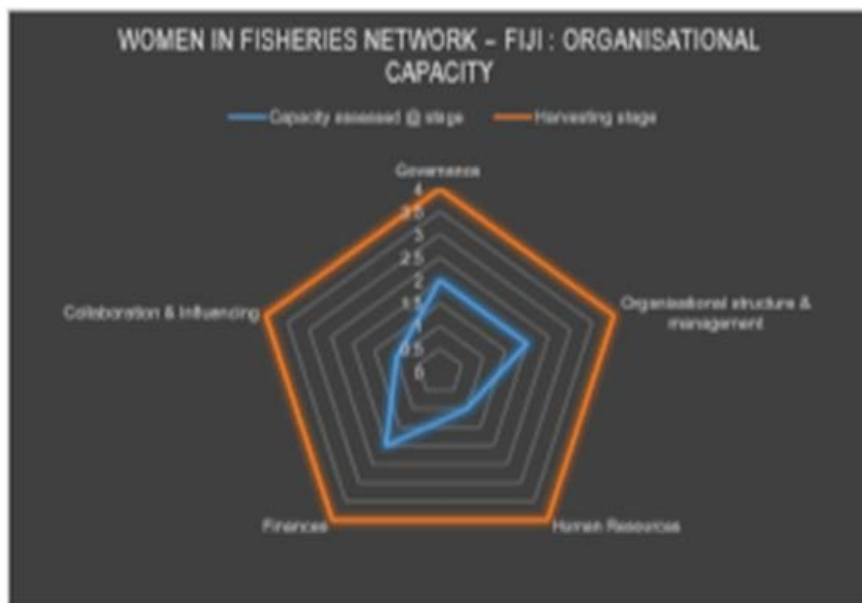
SPSV Partners also participated in a number of exercises to ascertain their **influencing capacity**, using the **"RPV Influencing Capacity Assessment Toolkit"** (the ICAT), as well as a **Safeguarding** training. Both activities allowed all partners, including WIFN-Fiji to map out any existing gaps their organisation had in respect of Safeguarding as well as map out their proposed way forward in terms of influencing - i.e. **What, Why, How and Who they wish to influence**.

The final exercise conducted with all SPSV partners following the self-assessment & safeguarding and influencing exercises - was the development of a **Rebbilib** for their different organisations, specifically relating to its way forward in terms of the areas assessed. The word "rebbilib" refers to stick charts which were used by Marshallese navigators to navigate the ocean. The stick charts represented the major ocean swell patterns & the ways the islands disrupted those patterns, etc. By using this same analogy, the **SPSV Partners** were led through an exercise allowing them to reflect on the identified strengths & weaknesses of the organisation in the different areas; prioritise which areas required action & what that action would be; identify the level of support they would need to achieve a shift in capacity, whether financial or internally within their organisation; and finally understanding the links between each & how a shift in one area of capacity could impact on another. These were all mapped out through a participatory process.





At the end of the 3 days, **WIFN-Fiji** had completed a self assessment of their organisation covering the areas of **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE & MECHANISMS**; **ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT**; **HUMAN RESOURCES**; **FINANCES**; and **COLLABORATION & INFLUENCING**. They also had completed the mapping of their own **REBBILB** for the **GOVERNANCE** - identifying the proposed way forward in order to shift their capacity. **WIFN-Fiji** however needs to complete this same process for the remaining 4 areas of: **Organisational Structure**; **Human Resources**; **Finances**; and **Collaboration & Influencing**. This document attempts to capture all these discussions and resolutions, and has been compiled by the **RPV** project team - and will be shared with **WIFN-Fiji** to assist them with their ongoing work around their **Organisational Development** and as well as to assist them in identifying key actions to address capacity gaps.

Functional capabilities	Capacity assessed @ stage	Baseline stage
Governance		Seedling: Whilst WIFN-Fiji is registered, in they currently have some challenges around retention of Board members as well as conduct of meetings, and awareness in respect of Organisational Structure. For this reason, their ranking in terms 'Governance' is at the Seeding stage.
Organisational structure & management		Seedling: WIFN-Fiji's capacity in relation to its 'Organisational structure' is at Seeding stage - in light of reflections that inductions need to be strengthened, and that the Organisational review process is not consultative.
Human Resources		Planting: WIFN-Fiji's capacity in respect of 'Human Resources' is at the Planting stage. WIFN-Fiji presently has challenges in respect of retaining staff, with overlapping policies and inconsistent staff meetings. The development of a Performance appraisal system is a work in progress, and staff development recommendations are not taken seriously.
Finances		Seedling: Although WIFN-Fiji staff reflected that their financial record keeping is exemplary, they did share that there have been instances of payment vouchers being lost. A further difficulty raised was the lack of qualified financial staff to handle these with the high staff turnover. Difficulties with conducting reconciliations and maintaining records were also highlighted. In light of the above, WIFN-Fiji's Financial organisational capacity is at the Seeding stage.

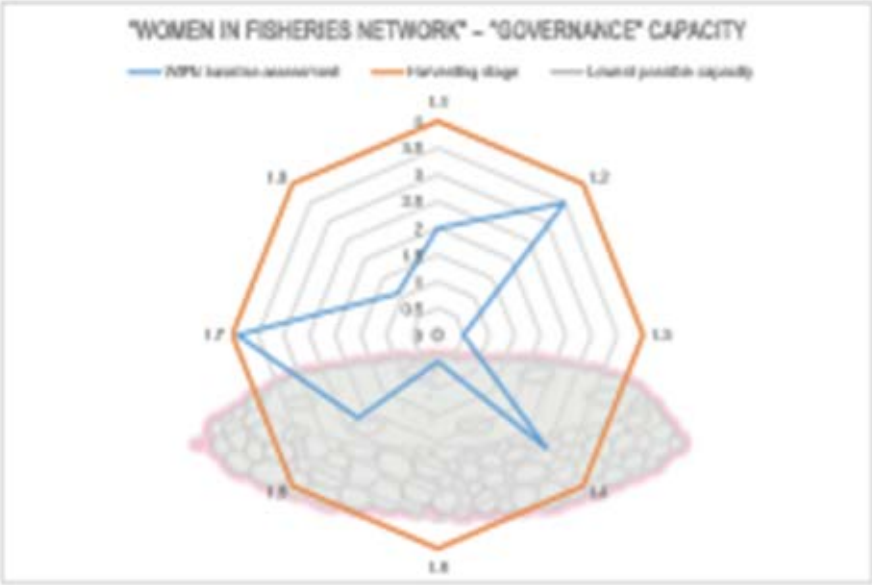
Collaboration & Influencing		Planting: WFN-Fiji's strength is in the area of conducting research. However though this may be the case, it was shared that alliances are yet to be strengthened and there is a lack of engagement with these for influencing work. Although they may have contacts in the communities, there is a lack of political will to conduct influencing work. For this reason, WFN-Fiji's capacity in terms of 'Collaboration & Influencing' is at the Planting stage.
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WOMEN IN FISHERIES NETWORK FIJI "GOVERNANCE" ASSESSMENT

#	Indicator	Comments or self-assessment					Planned actions to get results
5.0	Governance Structure & Mechanisms						
1.1	Purpose of the CSO	No membership meeting. Members not part of organisational structure.					
1.2	Registration with local authorities	Compliant with all legal and financial requirements.					
1.3	Governance of the CSO	No Board of Trustees. Only have 2 Board members.					(a) Establish a full Board; (b) Review Board composition and Constitution
1.4	Constituency of the CSO	This is a work in progress. Validity of RCA Research.					(a) Test Strategy for all wharfs; (b) Establish a network and partnership
1.5	CSO Goals and Strategy	Board of trustees has resigned. Annual General Meeting scheduled to be held in December.					(a) Strategic Plan to be comprehensive and realistic
1.6	Process of membership of Governance structure	Waiting for elections. No Annual General Meeting was held last year.					(a) Review membership structure; (b) Review membership fee
1.7	Board accountability & transparency	Minutes are tabled at Staff meetings.					(a) Create Job descriptions for Board members
1.8	Financial sustainability of the organisation	Board not raising funds. All projects due to end in May 2021. Mobilisation Advisor (high cost) and Trust limitations.					(a) Board to look for funding

WOMEN IN FISHERIES NETWORK FIJI "GOVERNANCE" ASSESSMENT



WOMEN IN FISHERIES NETWORK FIJI "ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE" - ASSESSMENT

#	Indicators	Comments	Planning (1)	Seedling (2)	Rearing (3)	Harvesting (4)	Planned action
2.0	Organisational Structure & Management		Planning (1)	Seedling (2)	Rearing (3)	Harvesting (4)	
2.1	Organisational Structure	Board - Treasurer - Secretary		Seedling (2)			
2.2	Policies & procedures	Induction is very brief. No in depth training		Seedling (2)			
2.3	Organisational Review	Not consultative. After a week in progress			Rearing (3)		



APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS UNDERTAKEN BY CONSULTANTS WITH THE KEY INFORMANTS

1. When was your CSO established?
2. How long have you worked for the CSO?
3. Most CSOs have a Constitution like yours yet most of its provisions have not been implemented, for example your CSO has not held an AGM. Under the law, your CSO is also required to explain the activities/programmes it has implemented and how it fulfills the vision and purpose of the organisation in the preceding financial year and it must be supported by audited accounts.

None of these actions have happened. Can you please explain why?
 - Do people in your organization understand the Constitution of the organization?
 - If not, are there training on the Constitution and policies of the organization?
 - Do they have access to the Constitution?
4. Your CSO has not fully implemented the oversight role of the Board and its linkages to the development and implementation of the CSO's policies and processes.
 - Does your Board meeting regularly?
 - Are your Board members familiar with the CSO policies and processes?
 - Are any of your Board members involved in the updating or revision of CSO policies and processes?
 - Are the decisions of the Board, where appropriate communicated to the CSO staff?
 - Are Board members required to declare conflicts of interest? And is this a standing agenda item in Board meeting?
5. Can you provide an example where the relationship between the Board and ED or the Board and the staff raised red flags about ethics and integrity?
6. What are the sources of your funds?
 - Do you report on these funds to the donors?
 - Are your reporting timely or most often delayed? Why?
7. Can you provide an example of how the poor governance has affected your relationships with:
 - fellow CSOs
 - donors
 - the State?

8. Does your CSO have policies?

- Are the policies effectively communicated to all Staff?
- Are the policies readily available or accessible?
- Does your CSO have a financial policy?
- Does it comply with the financial policy in terms of your financial transactions?
- Do you have annual audits of the organization?
- Does it have a procurement policy?
- Apart from audit, how else are they monitored for compliance?
- Does your CSO have a finance/procurement officer?

9. Are policies effectively implemented?

- How often are they amended or checked for relevance?
- Can staff complain if there are breaches of the policy? And if so to whom?
- is there a Whistleblower policy in the Organisation?

10. Are there strong oversight between your CSO Board and the Head of the Organisation; - and between the head of the organization to the staff?

11. How is your CSO currently addressing these governance issues? Mechanism? Has your CSO Recruited consultants or is it being done in-house?

Are there any governance reform process ongoing to address the governance issues?

APPENDIX 4: CSOS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH THE CONSULTANTS FOR THE STATE OF GOVERNANCE REPORT

CSO	DATE	MODE
SViT	2 December 2020	In person
TANGO	2 December 2020	ZOOM
DSE	4 December 2020	ZOOM
AMAK	10 December 2020	ZOOM
SUNGO	4 December 2020	ZOOM
Reach-MI	8 December 2020	ZOOM
CYC	7 December 2020	ZOOM
PCP	7 December 2020	ZOOM

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