



Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT)

# Monthly Newpage

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## RDP Community Helpers Training Underway with SIDT



The Rural Development Program (2) implementation team is being prepared for the roll out of its nationwide activities with a 4-week training course being facilitated in Honiara by the Solomon Islands Development Trust.

RDP 2 is a five year multi-donor project which is scheduled to be rolled out to all constituencies across the country, commencing 2015. It has funding from the World Bank, Australia, the EU and UN bodies.

Around 60 community helpers, provincial team leaders and their deputies are taking part at SIDT's Chinatown headquarters.

SIDT executive director, Mr Longden Manedika said the organisation's vast experience working in villages was a key factor in it being engaged for the training.

Mr Manedika said for many years SIDT had been outspoken about improving the quality of village living in Solomon Islands.

"Village living and the village setting is the core of this country," he said, "It is where 80 percent of our people live. We must keep it strong."

The director said there was a

'good fit' between the RDP and SIDT with both institutions focusing on the village and improving the village standards and development.

He said the current cooperation was a strong indicator of what can be achieved when government and non-government sectors leverage their collective capacity.

Mr Manedika said there were challenges in aligning government services with village plans and wishes. This, he said, was where an experienced village advocate like SIDT had a crucial role to play.

The training underway in Honiara is aimed at equipping community helpers with the skills and ability to be responsible and constructive agents in project design and implementation.

Mr Manedika said too often the social component of development projects was overlooked. He said some bigger national projects were still on halt or were delayed simply because the social component had not been properly addressed.

SIDT is conducting the training with support from the Development Services Exchange, and other resource people along with specialists and resources from the RDP.



Lampio Gereia

## It's time to manage CDF: Gereia

It is now high time to fully and properly manage the Constituency Development Fund says, Program Manager of Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) Mr Fataleae Gereia.

In an interview after the launching of Rural Development Program (RDP) Officers training Mr Gereia said most people only heard of the Constituency Development Fund and it is now time to make this fund more visible in terms development in rural Solomon Islands.

He stressed that proper management and implementation of RCDF is needed to complement the efforts of other stakeholders such as projects under the RDP.

Mr Gereia said the management of CDF must be not be controlled by politicians but properly administered by independent bodies who will ensure rural communities are empowered to raise their standard of living.

"For so long millions of dollars are allocated for rural development, but there is lack of real evidence to show that these monies have been

put to good and accountable use".

"These funds would have make a huge impact to rural development and decentralizing economic activities if they properly managed," he added.

He said the government has lost lots of development opportunities that would diversify economic activities due to poor management of the CDF.

"Rural Development is the only option to trigger diverse economic activities throughout the country because the majority of our population are living in the rural areas.

"Further to that most export commodities are coming from rural areas, for example cocoa, coconut and kava to name the few.

"If the government can create transparent and accountable mechanisms in place to regulate RCDF, then they can also invest this fund to improve these development activities," Mr Gereia said.

He stressed that rural development can be a major boost to tangible development that would provide huge return benefits to the country.

Meanwhile Mr Gereia said it now time for Members of Parliament and their Constituency Development Officer to work with the Rural Development Program Officers on priority developments most needed in the respective provinces.

He said it will be a good idea for MPs to work with provincial government and RD Officers, and all other players who are trying their very best to see the rural areas developed.

Mr Gereia said tangible development can only be achieved if close dialog is made between the different levels of governments within Solomon Islands and with all active actors in rural development.

Meanwhile the RDP training facilitated by SIDT which was opened this week will run for four weeks.

## Updates

- *SIDT Staff Augustine Todonga and Eddie Bira are in Samasodu, Isabel to facilitate the Proposal writing training under the Bridging the Gap (BTG) Program. Samasodu Community is one of the many communities in the country that SIDT worked with in its Bridging the Gap Program. The BTG is funded by AFAP.*
- *The 4 weeks training conducted by SIDT, DSE, RDP and other resource people for RDP Community helpers, provincial team leader and their deputies are now winding down. The 4 weeks training ends on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The RDP 2 is a five year multi-donor project which is scheduled to be rolled out to all constituencies across the country, commencing 2015. It has funding from the World Bank, Australia, the EU and UN bodies.*
- *The SIDT 4CA project in Russell Islands is planning to conduct training on climate change and disaster awareness for the children and the 3 communities within the project catchment area namely Marulaon, Baisin and Karumalon. SIDT is also planning to celebrate World Environment Day with its community partners during its next visit to Russell Islands early June.*

# The 1<sup>st</sup> Non Government Organization (NGO) in the Solomon Islands

The acronym N.G.O. is now ubiquitous. Non Government Organizations: why do they exist and for what reason? Who are they and how do they operate? Where are they operating from and most importantly of all, for whom do they operate?

These are really healthy questions.

According to Wikipedia an NGO is an organization that is neither a part of a government nor a conventional for-profit business. Usually set up by ordinary citizens, NGOs may be funded by governments, foundations, businesses, or private persons.

To consider the above questions and definition, let us bring our consciousness to our shores.

Solomon Islands is a nation of villages. Before our villages were drawn into the modern government system they had their own governance structures in place.

It's important to remember that the village operates with its own strength in ensuring that the people are being served. In this regard, when individuals organize, plan and implement their strategies it's evidence of people putting their heads together. Thus were formed the first NGOs in our beloved country.

From those first village meetings came Solomon Islands' first NGOs. This is the governance system that is now forgotten as our root; our tribes, clans, settlements, villages etc have been there that make our today. They are not NGO's; it is their governance system taking charge.

The modern governance system now in charge makes us term them as village committees, recipients, beneficiaries, or civil societies, (charities ....)etc.

In the words of Solomon Islands Development Trust's founder, Lt. Dr. John Roughan NGOs are as old as the first village meeting. And it is from these words from SIDT's founder and the village setting that the first NGO in the Solomon

Islands now operates. A group of planners and implementers at the core of this Nation, for the people they serve. They utilize resources from within and engage on their sole strength and capacity in carrying out their strategies.

There are national and international NGOs working here in a range of activities and across a number of sectors. They can be useful groups that compliment or provide alternative approaches to Government activities. These are meant for worthy courses. Village committees and groups are no exception.

In today's world most NGOs have to work hard to secure funding to complete their plans. Some become the conduits to channel funding through to their pockets, an interest that sometimes does not show value for money in some partnerships of likeminded people, foreign technical advisors etc and experts who are also engaging our local experts indirectly (or local experts carry these up in the new tradition). They can turn things that aren't necessary to becoming urgent thus the risk of overnight change impact local knowledge and strengths.

Despite of who they are or how they operate, healthy NGO's should complement government programs if positive change is the desire of the people of Solomon Islands.

SIDT is an example of an indigenous and local NGO in the Solomon Islands that emerged, May 6<sup>th</sup> 1982 with the goal to improve the quality of village living.

With the increasing rate of inter-veners coming our shores, SIDT put strong emphasis in its devel-

opment awareness that the village setting is the core of Solomon Islands and we need to protect and improve it so that our natural beauty, resources and the traditional gover-



opment awareness that the village setting is the core of Solomon Islands and we need to protect and improve it so that our natural beauty, resources and the traditional gover- nance system/s and their action plans are paid the attention that will be more profitable for the Solomon Islands.

Please visit us at New Chinatown and we can share our experience of how we do our work as one of the country's indigenous and pioneering NGOs. Email us [admin@sidt.org.sb](mailto:admin@sidt.org.sb) or phone 23409.

When the time is ripe, bridging the gap between our Government, NGO's and our people is a desire at to make us relate well with each other to serve our people and country. It's not about being first; rather it's about serving our village people better.

# Village Voice



**Clifton Bennie**  
Marovo Lagoon  
Western Province

The training helps me to clearly understand the objectives and process of RDP in working with the community level, have basic idea on funding, procurement and acquittals, the roles and responsibilities of Community Helpers, the importance of conflict resolution in the community, data entry using tablets and I am empowered to improve from Phase 1 project operations last year.



**Rosemary Tenaha**  
Rennell  
Renbel Province

I was so blessed in attending the training. The training helps me have the confidence in working with people in my community and to work effectively with RDP as well. The skills and knowledge learnt will help empower me improve my work in the community. I urged our Member of Parliament, the national and provincial Government and the good people in my community to work together in order to put in place community developments in our rural areas.

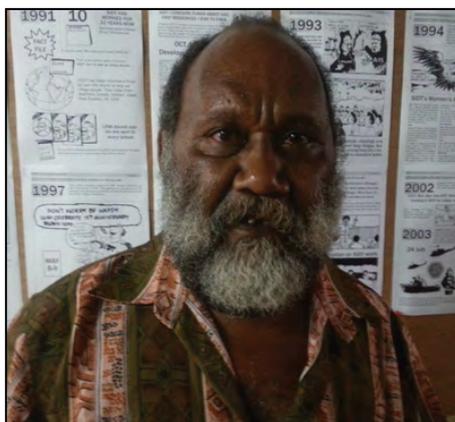
The Rural Development Program (2) implementation team is being prepared for the roll out of its nationwide activities thus around 60 community helpers, provincial team leaders and their deputies have attended a four week training course being facilitated in Honiara by the Solomon Islands Development Trust.

RDP 2 is a five year multi-donor project



**Frances Rero**  
Tangarare  
Guadalcanal Province

The training with SIDT has built my confidence in working with community people. The knowledge and skills gained will also equip me to communicate and work effectively. I also learned how to use new technologies such as the GPS and tablet to help me with my report writing and work filing. Lastly I urge all Community Helpers who attended the training to put into practice what we have learned in the four weeks training program.



**John Mae**  
Central Kwar'ae  
Malaita Province

The training empowers us Community Helpers to work effectively with Community development sub projects in identification and implementation of Projects in the community level.

ect which is scheduled to be rolled out to all constituencies across the country, commencing 2015. It has funding from the World Bank, Australia, the EU and UN bodies.

Newspage has interviewed some participants of the workshop on how the training with SIDT will change how they will work with village people.



**Nixon Thagramana**  
Hograno Katova Kia Havulei  
Constituency  
Isabel Province

The conflict resolution and communication trainings with SIDT will help me improve my skills and knowledge on effective approaches to address different situations in the community. With the RDP sessions, there are lessons learnt from the previous RDP approaches to community development funds to the RDP Phase 2 program which is much easier to handle and work with rural people.



**Lionel Koroma**  
East Choiseul  
Choiseul Province

The training with SIDT helped build my confidence on how to work with rural people, knowing how to identify priority issues in the community and solving problems. I also learned that gender balanced participation is important in our decision makings, and working together is the key to achieve better results in our rural development plans and projects.