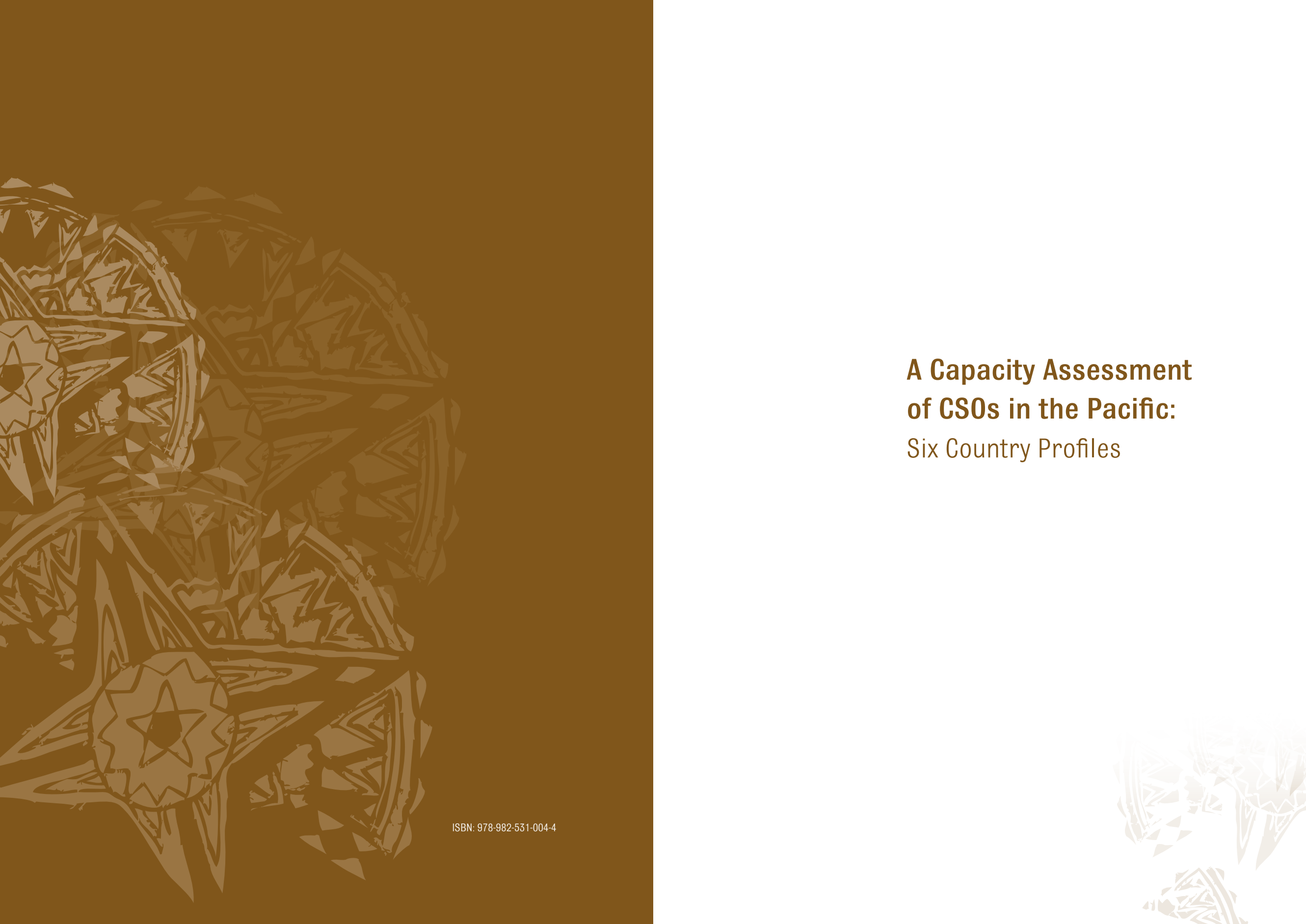




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A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific: Six Country Profiles



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Foreword

Civil society/civil society organizations (CSOs) make a very real and key contribution to development and democratisation processes. Their roles include the provision of basic services such as primary education, health, water and sanitation; participating in local planning and budgeting; advocating for human rights and the needs and priorities of their constituency especially the marginalised groups; providing shelter, counseling and support services to disadvantaged groups and victims of violence; monitoring the performance of government and other stakeholders in the provision of services; and more generally, progress towards the MDGs.

It is widely recognised that an active and vibrant civil society is an important factor in the democratisation process. By mediating between the state and citizenry, civil society provides the mechanism to enhance citizens' voice and the engagement of citizens in various democratic processes that contributes to deepening democracy. While CSOs are expected to perform these varied functions, they face a range of capacity constraints and challenges. The challenges vary from organization to organization and are different in each country. They include: constraints relating to the overall external environment within which civil society operates; specific internal organizational capacity deficits that affect their ability to perform effectively and efficiently; and for many, a lack of financial resources and stability for funding their programmes or projects.

This capacity assessment of civil society organizations in the Pacific is an attempt to undertake a systematic assessment to understand and document the capacity constraints that civil society organizations face in this region. Mindful of the sensitivity of such an exercise, the capacity assessment was conducted in a participatory manner in the development of the questionnaire, in the conduct of the assessment itself, and in the validation of the results.

This Report presents in-depth capacity assessments of the six Pacific Island Countries where the assessment exercise was conducted.

We hope this publication will provide readers with an understanding of the capacity development issues that affect civil society organizations in the Pacific region, and shed light on how they could be better supported and strengthened to advance and achieve better development outcomes for the region as a whole.

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The formulation of the overall project and its subsequent management was undertaken under the leadership and guidance of Ernesto Bautista, the UNDP Pacific Centre Regional Governance Advisor. Mr. Bautista also facilitated the process of drafting, synthesising and editing the various documents and Reports associated with the study. Mr. Bautista was ably supported by Isikeli Valemei of the UNDP Pacific Centre.

The UNDP Pacific Centre would like to thank Achila Imchen who undertook the challenging task of synthesizing analyses from the different documents, and structured and edited them to produce a coherent and readable knowledge product.

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Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Cook Islands	4
Chapter 3: Federated States of Micronesia	11
Chapter 4: Republic of the Fiji Islands	17
Chapter 5: Solomon Islands	25
Chapter 6: Tonga	33
Chapter 7: Tuvalu	40
End Notes	50
References	51

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CROP	Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NLU	National Liaison Unit
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisation
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRNGOs	Pacific Regional Non-Government Organizations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific

Chapter 1

Introduction

Pacific Island Countries (PICs) are faced with numerous domestic and external challenges on their path for meeting the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Like much of the rest of the world, they are experiencing the impacts of globalisation, non-sustainable development policies and, more recently, increased focus on the threat of terrorism. The proportion of the population under the basic need poverty line is rising, and rural-urban migration is leading to urbanisation and squatter settlement growth. Civil unrest and political instability in some PICs highlight the importance of urgent governance issues. These challenges are compounded by PICs' limited geographical size and location, their dependence on narrow resource bases, limited international trade opportunities, and their particular vulnerability to natural and environmental disasters.

In the Pacific region, civil society organizations (CSOs) represent a critical constituency and development partner for advancing towards the MDGs. There are currently more than 1,000 CSOs operating in the region at different levels, covering a wide spectrum of issues. This ranges from disabilities, youth, gender, trade, health, environment, culture and governance. Over 85 percent of CSOs in the Pacific are involved in activities that are aimed at promoting or achieving the MDGs. The CSO community therefore potentially represents a force to be reckoned with for creating positive change in the region.

The reality, however, is that this potential is constrained by the numerous challenges CSOs face. Their legitimacy is frequently questioned by governments, with many governments viewing them with skepticism and distrust, and vice versa. Dialogue between CSOs and governments are often ad-hoc, unsupported by any institutional legal frameworks. In addition, CSOs face various capacity challenges. Many of them do not have stable funding sources and rely on unpredictable, donor-driven project funding. Chronic limited human resource capacity, the inability to recruit and retain high

quality staff, and high staff turnover are other areas where CSOs face urgent capacity challenges.

While CSOs have undergone disparate self-assessment initiatives with external facilitators, there has not been a systematic region-wide effort to map out and examine their capacity development needs. What are the existing capacity levels within the CSO community in the Pacific? What are the specific capacity gaps of CSOs? What are the constraints they encounter while working towards their goals and priorities? How are they supported in their activities by their socio-economic, political and legal environments?

Underpinned by these key questions, UNDP's Pacific Centre facilitated an extensive regional study in 2008-2009 aimed at assessing capacity development challenges of CSOs in the region. This study was undertaken with the following objectives:

- assess existing capacity and needs of selected CSOs operating at the regional and national levels (identifying strengths and weakness);
- identify and develop realistic, feasible and time-bound capacity development strategies (based on the capacity assessment);
- document lessons learned during the course of facilitating this initiative; and
- assess the socio-economic, politico-cultural and legal environment in which CSOs operate.

Field work was conducted in six PICs:

- Cook Islands
- Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
- Fiji
- Solomon Islands
- Tonga
- Tuvalu

The capacity assessment exercise also included Pacific Regional NGOs (PRNGOs), which represent networks of national CSOs at the regional level. While in-country visits and one-one-interaction with participants from CSOs occurred in the six countries, information and data were also obtained via email from CSOs in Pacific countries other than the six.

The study resulted in three separate but interlinked reports, of which this Report is one. This Report presents the country specific capacity assessment of CSOs in the six countries to provide a more detailed account of the state of civil society community in the Pacific region. Each country profile is presented in separate chapters. While both strengths and capacity assets are highlighted, the chapters focus on capacity deficits (areas of weaknesses) and systemic inadequacies that challenge the overall development and functioning of CSOs. The existing approaches to capacity development in the CSO community are also highlighted.

The framework for the overall capacity assessment exercise was provided by a Clearing House Framework¹ created for and by Pacific CSOs. Priority areas identified by the Framework were adapted into five axes of ‘CSO capacity’ for the study. Under each of the axis, the capacity assessment exercise covered a broad spectrum of issues, ranging from CSO capacity for strategic planning, infrastructure and internal management systems, to resource mobilisation and capacity development activities. The capacity assessment findings in the six countries are presented in a main table in each chapter, profiling key issues under the axes (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Country Profiles: Capacity Assessment in Five Areas

1. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Strategy
Organizational Culture and Climate
Systems and Processes
Outputs and Performance
2. SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCING
Infrastructure and Internal Management Structures
Manpower and Human Resource Management
Resource Mobilisation Strategies and Constraints
Capacity Development Activities
3. INFORMATION SHARING, COOPERATION AND ADVOCACY
Capacity to use ICT
4. STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS
External Relations (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP ² agencies, end users)
5. LEGAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

² For a detailed explanation on the Clearing House Framework, please refer to the publication A Capacity Assessment of CSOs in the Pacific.
³ The regional bodies collectively known as the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) are comprised of the following:

- Forum Fisheries Agency
- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (formerly South Pacific Commission)
- South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
- South Pacific Applied Geosciences Commission (Formerly CCOP/SOPAC)
- South Pacific Tourism Organization (formerly Tourism Council of the South Pacific)
- University of the South Pacific
- Pacific Islands Development Programme
- Fiji School of Medicine
- South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment

The findings in the profile tables and the accompanying analyses emerge from the in-country field work with selected CSOs. It is important to note that while the Report refers to them simply as ‘CSOs’ they specifically represent only the views of the CSO participants from the sample group, and those consulted during the research process.

Fieldwork

CSOs in the Pacific region work on diverse and broad ranging issues. While some focus on the MDGs, a number of them work on other sectors, ranging from religion to disability advocacy. Youth and health are focus areas of many CSOs in the region across countries.

The architecture of the CSO community in the Pacific region is a two-tier structure. One consists of national CSOs at the country level, while the other consists of PRNGOs, which serve as the mechanism for CSOs’ engagement with inter-governmental regional organizations or agencies. At the country level, CSOs consist of various network and stand-alone organizations operating at the national and or sub-national levels, including various community-based and faith-based organizations. Many national CSOs also have secondary areas of programmatic focus. PRNGOs, on the other hand, are more focused on specific areas of expertise, as are CSOs which are the local counterparts of international CSOs such as the WWF.

Fieldwork for this study began in January 2009. Prior to the start of the field work, researchers liaised with the National Liaison Units (NLUs), the national

peak body CSO in each of the PICs, to arrange for a comprehensive sector-wide representation of CSOs to participate in the assessment. Given the length of the questionnaire, it was decided that eight CSOs from each country would participate in the exercise. (Due to issues such as cancelation of assessment appointments, however, a full eight interviews were not conducted in all of the countries).

During the interview process, the researcher worked one-to-one with CSO representatives to complete the assessment questionnaire and provided supporting material when possible. The researchers also took notes of conversations with CSO members and examined relevant documents to gather additional data. They contacted donors where ever possible to ensure that their views were taken into account as well.

While the questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection, the in-country field work also included CSO group consultations which included the presence of a PRNGO representative to ensure the participation of PRNGOs, and that the processes of consultation were properly observed. Furthermore, after the completion of the draft of the country assessment, a workshop was organized to discuss the findings and obtain further clarifications and inputs from CSOs.

The findings presented in this Report are a collation of data from the one-to-interviews process, responses to the questionnaires, and inputs obtained from CSOs during the group consultations and workshops.

Chapter 2

Cook Islands

Location:	In the Pacific Ocean to the north east of New Zealand, south east of Samoa and south west of Tahiti.
Land area:	236.7 km ²
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):	1,830,000 km ² of ocean
Capital:	Avarua, Rarotonga
Population:	Total population estimate 2009: 22,600 ⁱⁱⁱ Resident population estimate 2009: 13,300 (resident population comprises only those normally resident in the Cook Island)
Ethnic groups:	Cook Islands Maori (Polynesian) 87.7%, part Cook Islands Maori 5.8%, other 6.5% ^{iv}
Languages:	Cook Islands Maori, English (official), Pukapukan
Religions:	Cook Islands Christian Church 55.9%, Roman Catholic 16.8%, Seventh-Day Adventists 7.9%, Church of Latter Day Saints 3.8%, other Protestant 5.8%, other 4.2%, unspecified 2.6%, none 3% ^v
Human Development Index (HDI):	Rank 2006: 1 Value 2006: 0.789 ^{vi}
Literacy rate (% aged 15 and over):	95% ^{vii}
Life expectancy at birth (years):	74.7 ^{viii}
Under-five mortality rate:	18 (per 1,000 live births) ^{ix}
GDP:	USD 183.2 million ^x
GDP per capita:	USD 9,100 ^{xi}
Economy based on:	Tourism, fishing, black pearls, agriculture, financial services
Development implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vast distances between remote, sparsely populated outer islands• Limited natural resources• Vulnerable to natural disasters such as cyclones

Overview

CSOs in Cook Islands are legally established as incorporated societies. Although not all have clearly defined vision and missions statements and goals—of the seven CSOs interviewed, only three possessed them—they clearly have a sense of purpose. The absence of written statements has not hindered CSOs from understanding their larger organizational goals or their operations from getting off the ground. Many Cook Islands CSOs are still at early stages of developing capacity in the areas of infrastructural facilities, resource mobilisation and manpower (Table 2.1). Despite the fact that CSOs have been operating in the Cook Islands for a long time (the youngest CSO in the study was established over eight years ago), none consulted in this study can be classified as being in a ‘mature’ stage of organizational development.

The capacity assessment indicates that while CSOs are generally satisfied with the outcomes of their modest goals, they have not achieved as much as they would like. Some participants in the study clearly indicated that there were projects they wanted to undertake but could not due to their lack of infrastructure. Lack of funding is the biggest capacity gap for CSOs. It hinders their plans for expansion and impacts other areas such as obtaining skilled labor or even basic office equipment.

CSOs also face problems that stem from specific societal factors in the country. One such factor is migration, which has a diminutive impact on CSO membership and undermines continuity in key areas such as leadership. Another factor is the conflict between the traditional rootedness of Cook Islanders in a church culture and certain aspects of modernity. Aspects of secular culture, along with tourism, are drawing away youth from their affiliation with religion-based CSOs, leading them to disengage with such organizations and their programmes (Box 2.1).

It is only in the past few years that Cook Islands’ CSOs have made concerted efforts to establish themselves. A few of them can be classified as being in the ‘expanding’ stage of organizational development, efficiently and effectively carrying out their work programmes. Some demonstrate a high level of professionalism. They have clear focus areas for their operations, with gender issues at the centre. They have managed to solicit sustained financial assistance from donors such as the NZ Aid Programme for activities that have been ongoing for a number of years.

Table 2.1. Cook Island Csos: Capacity Assessment in Five Areas

1. Organizational Development	
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs strategies are not formally defined. They are formulated informally through face-to-face discussions, in group or personal meetings. This method is effective enough for disseminating information about organizational strategies. CSOs appear satisfied with the informal method of interaction. Given the strength of community ties in their culture, formalised processes and structures are incompatible with organizational needs.
Organizational Culture and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational culture of CSOs is similar to the local culture of the country, based on maintaining close personal ties and relationships. Lack of resources in CSOs also requires that members get along and assist each other in order to 'get things done'. Close personal relations are particularly an asset for CSOs to access information. Personal connections in government become resources.
Systems and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs have systems and processes in place which are relevant for their needs and effective in achieving their goals. Some exceptions to this include CSOs that are newly formed or those whose management is undergoing reforms.
Outputs and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most CSOs are satisfied with their outputs and performance which are set against modest goals. Some CSOs indicate their desire to do more is hampered by low funding and stretched human resources. Due to lack of paid technical staff, members frequently undertake additional responsibilities outside their areas of expertise. Non-funding related issues, such as migration and activities of the secular culture, affect output and performance capacity of CSOs.
2. Sustainability And Resourcing	
Infrastructure and Internal Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure and internal management structure of CSOs are adequate for their current operations. Many CSOs do not have office space and equipment such as computers, printers. Infrastructure constraints discourage CSOs from undertaking additional projects. Funding is the underlying factor behind infrastructural constraints. Lack of funds also impact internal management structures. Only two of the seven CSOs interviewed for this study had a full time paid employee. The remaining were volunteers, who had paid work elsewhere. Volunteerism in CSOs contributes to loose internal structures. Many CSOs do not enforce formal management systems because of the high number of volunteers. Even those in place are not rigidly followed. 'Commonsense' and 'having and maintaining good relationships' are key mechanisms for ensuring efficiency.
Manpower and Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manpower is an area of concern. CSOs do not have a stable workforce due to the vast majority of staff being volunteers. Human resources are managed by a commonsense approach, as opposed to a strict adherence to established procedures. Formal procedures may not be very useful for building local community relationships, which often requires negotiation and flexibility. Main incentive for workers to stay in the organization is their relationship with others and dedication to their work.

Resource Mobilisation Strategies and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All CSOs interviewed admitted that they were short on resources, of which the most urgent was funding. Staff members with technical knowledge, particularly in legal, financial, and technological areas, are key needs. Some CSOs rely on external providers of financial and business services, spending resources they can ill afford. The lack of funds, however, encourages efficiency. CSOs are careful in how they use the funds available to them. CSOs also mobilise resources through other avenues, such as help of associates, the community, and in some cases, the government. Another important resource for CSOs is the social relationships—with relatives, friends, and associates outside of their organizations—which provide them with connections to media and other support systems.
3. Information Sharing, Cooperation And Advocacy	
Capacity to use ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of financial resources and basic infrastructure means limited access of ICTs for CSOs. CSOs have found alternative ways of accessing ICT, such as their other work places, or through contacts in private businesses and government.
4. Stakeholder Relations	
External Relations (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies, end users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs have very good working relations with those in government (a number of CSO staff members are also government employees). An important relationship for Cook Islands CSOs is with the Department of Internal Affairs, with which all CSOs are required to engage. Other government departments that are important are the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education. CSOs receive financial assistance from the government, as well as other benefits such as capacity enhancing training programmes. External donors, in the form of local businesses and organizations, play a notable role in civil society operations. Although the amounts are not large from these sources, given the small scale of a lot of CSO operations, the impact of such contributions can be considerable. External relationships with partners and networks do not have a significant impact on CSO operations. These relationships are primarily useful for information sharing on latest developments in their fields of operations.
5. Legal And Regulatory Environment	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most CSOs in Cook Islands are legally established as incorporated societies. The current legal and regulatory environment is neutral with regards to CSOs in the country.

Women ostensibly play a very dominant role in CSO operations. The governing bodies of a majority of the CSOs interviewed for this study comprised of women. Of all the participants, less than a quarter were male. In fact, they indicated they were trying to include more males in their operations. The CEO of one of the CSOs consulted was female.

Cook Islands' broader societal culture markedly impacts the workings of CSOs in number of positive ways. They are aided by a local culture that encourages strong community ties, nurturing good relations, and a spirit of lending assistance among members. Their organizational culture is thus underpinned by close personal relationships

and one-one contacts. CSOs have benefited from these interactions by getting sponsorships from local businesses, obtaining financial assistance from their members, and even soliciting resources through help of family and friends. It has also helped in facilitating good working relations with government.⁴ A number of CSO staff members are government employees.

The strong sense of community and the country's small population size have become instruments by which CSOs achieve their organizational goals. The area of human resources, for example, is managed by social relationships, rather than through established formal procedures or contracts. Their strategy to share and dissemination information also occurs through face-to-face sessions and

personal meetings. In the face of resource scarcity in so many areas, from basic infrastructure to funding and manpower, the greatest resource for Cook Island CSOs are people. Maintaining amicable relations with one another is necessary in order to continue functioning, and in achieving their goals.

Capacity Gaps

CSO capacity deficits in the Cook Islands start at the level of basic internal infrastructure (Box 2.2). Most of the CSOs interviewed for the study did not have office space or equipment such as computers and printers. The fact that CSOs have managed to continue their operations despite these constraints is a testament to their resourcefulness and commitment.

Box 2.1. The Youth And The Church

Many religion-based CSOs in Cook Islands feel the impact of the divergence of ideals between the traditional local church culture, and the local youth, one of their target groups.

Cook Island's secular culture, which is prominent in nightclubs, and strongly supported by tourism, is increasingly attracting youth away from CSO programmes that are religion-based. Participants in the study noted that the values, ideals, and general interest of many Cook Island youth are not being reflected in the conservative nature of the church culture and its youth programmes. For example, many of the younger church members prefer more modern styles of worship. They want to address issues through contemporary forms of worship, such as more upbeat styled music, and the use of theatre-styled worship programmes such as plays and creative expression. These preferences conflict with older members, who prefer to maintain worship styles in line with what they perceive to be traditional church culture. This conflict is often resolved in favor of the older generations, and discourages younger members from attending.

Thus the attraction of nightlife entertainment scene, along with the conservative church culture, is drawing away younger church members from CSO-affiliated activities. Even if these CSOs are able to obtain resources from church funding sources, an increasing number of their intended recipients will remain disengaged from their programmes unless the divergence in ideals is addressed. This scenario presents a long term capacity problem many Cook Islands CSOs are attempting to address. In such situations, additional funding is unlikely to provide any solutions.

⁴ CSOs have noted that the flow of information from government to civil society, which currently occurs through relationships of familiarity and relatively easy access, may be hampered by its Official Information Act 2008. Although the Act is likely to benefit media, a number of participants in the study said that they are unlikely to benefit from it. In fact, it can be an impediment for civil society because it will bureaucratise the process for accessing government information, and restrict flow of information between themselves and their contacts in governments.

Box 2.2. What we Need: Desired Capacities Of Cook Island CSOs

The following are areas of concern for Cook Islands CSOs:

- *CSOs in the study identified staff training as priority for capacity development.*
- *There is especially need for training in areas of information and technology where skills update is a necessity. CSO staff members reported during the consultations that they need upskilling in the use of software such as MYOB and Microsoft Office. These are constantly being updated and many CSOs employ them in their work.*
- *For many CSOs functioning at minimal sustenance levels, achievement of modest capacity goals, such as procuring infrastructure (office space and equipment) and establishing management structures is the more realistic option.*
- *Foreign aid donors can have a larger impact by increasing their financial assistance to CSOs in areas such as salaries and office expenses. This would address weaknesses such as the inability of CSOs to retain staff, in particular well-qualified staff, and lessen their reliance on volunteers. It would also lessen their dependence on using equipment and facilities from other organizations.*

Foreign assistance makes up the bulk of funding for CSO projects (although assistance also comes from local governments and small businesses and organizations). The only two CSOs in the study with full-time paid staff positions were funded by the NZ Aid Programme. Foreign aid donors can have a large impact on the capacity levels of CSOs by increasing financial assistance in areas such as salaries and office expenses. This would address the challenge of organizations retaining staff, in particular well-qualified staff. It would also lessen their reliance on volunteers, who are important but not always available, as well as their dependence on facilities from other organizations.

One CSO in the study which fits into the 'expanding' stage of organizational development has been able to receive sustained funding from the NZ Aid Programme. This indicates success of its operations and its ability to carry out a wide range of programmes since the Programme's core funding is normally given on the basis of CSOs demonstrating their capacity to effectively carry out programmes that fit with its core goals. Despite this, the CEO of the organization admitted that it could do more, and that its desire for expansion was restricted by lack of financial resources.

The CSOs funded by the Programme noted that its funding was sufficient only for funding one full-time position in their organizations. Since the single salaried staff member was inundated with clerical work and activities such as maintaining the office and equipment, other important areas, such as sourcing funds for programmes and monitoring and evaluation, remain ignored.

Another capacity deficit is the inability of organizations to retain qualified staff due to the lack of funds. An example of this comes from a CSO which was formed in 2000, but was able to get start operations only in the last couple of years due to constraints in funding and manpower. The operations finally took off because of the experience and commitment of its staff members (who were highly qualified academic individuals), and because its work was academic in nature (such as developing a research database), which could be achieved without much financial resources and full-time paid employees. If a full-time employee was in place, the project activities would have taken off with greater ease and in a timelier manner. This case represents the challenges Cook Islands CSOs face in light of financial constraints and shortage of qualified staff. For this reason, CSOs rely on volunteers who work solely on the basis of their commitment to the 'cause' and the organization.

The volunteer staff is the most obvious capacity asset CSOs possess. Without substantial funding, people's greatest resources are themselves. At the same time, volunteerism, no matter how commendable, brings its own set of challenges. It must be acknowledged that the volunteering basis of CSOs is not conducive to their long term stability. The possibility of volunteers leaving to respond to better employment opportunities is ever present. The constant flow of people moving in and out of organizations also makes it difficult for CSOs to maintain a stable infrastructure. Staff members often have to cover multiple duties when others leave. In addition, when there is a sudden influx of new workers, the mix of skills may change regardless of its suitability for the organization. There is no guarantee therefore that CSOs will have a stable workforce.

Cook Island CSOs can also benefit from greater engagement with regional and international organizations working in these fields. Although most of their work is focused locally, there are key issues they address, such as climate change and gender equity, which are also being addressed by CSOs in the region and globally. A greater engagement at the regional and international level would greatly help Cook Islands CSOs in terms of knowledge building.

Existing Approaches to Capacity Development

Only a few CSOs in Cook Islands can be classified as being in a stage of organizational development where they are able to effectively carry out their

activities. The remaining fluctuates between the earliest stages of nascent development and a level where they are developing capacity in specific areas, such as internal structures and processes.

Within this framework, most staff members seem to have adequate training for their current roles in their respective organizations. In other words, their skills match the requirements of the programmes with which they are currently engaged. Capacity development, particularly in staff training, is likely to become necessary if CSOs expand their operations. Developments in knowledge and technical skills, particularly in the areas of computer technology and use of software, would be helpful (Box 2.3).

Given the circumstances in which they operate, Cook Island CSOs exhibit a resourcefulness to achieve their goals through alternative means. They adopt approaches that fit their circumstances, and in accordance with their societal and organizational culture. The commitment of CSOs staff members is praise-worthy. They also clearly make use of the 'resource' they have by means of their social relations and personal connections, which enable them to call on special favors whenever required. For example, the alternative arrangement to meet the challenge of ICT access is for staff to use equipment at their other places of paid employment, or through their contacts in private businesses and government. Such arrangements, however, cannot support the long-term sustainability of CSOs. Improving their capacity from the basic levels of infrastructure is urgently required.

Box 2.3. CSO Capacity Development Activities: Highlights

- Most CSOs do not have staff who are formally trained for the positions they hold. Only one out of the seven CSOs interviewed provided in-house training for its board members.
- Staff members in many CSOs acquire skills pertinent to their positions from the work they do elsewhere. They can transfer these skills and those learned through training at their work places of paid employment to their work in CSOs.
- Projects to raise organizational funds are key capacity development activities CSOs undertake.

Chapter 3 Federated States Of Micronesia

Location:	In the Pacific Ocean north of Papua New Guinea
Land area:	702 km ²
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):	2,978,000 km ² of ocean
Federal capital:	Palikir, Pohnpei Island
Population:	Total FSM population: 107,008
Ethnic groups:	Chuukese 48.8%, Pohnpeian 24.2%, Kosraean 6.2%, Yapese 5.2%, Yap outer islands 4.5%, Asian 1.8%, Polynesian 1.5%, other 6.4%, unknown 1.4% ^{xiii}
Languages:	English (official), Yapese, Ulithian, Woleaian, Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Kosraean, Nukuoro, and Kapingamarangi
Religions:	Roman Catholic 50%, Protestant 41.7%, other 3.8% ^{xiv}
Human Development Index (2010):	Rank 103 Value 0.636 ^{xv}
Literacy rate (% aged 15 and over):	89% ^{vi}
Life expectancy at birth (years):	69% ^{vii}
Under-five mortality rate :	39 (per 1,000 live births) ^{viii}
GDP:	USD 276.5 million ^{xix}
GDP per capita:	USD 2,702 ^{xx}
Economy based on:	Transfer payments from the US, fishing, tourism, subsistence agriculture
Development implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote and widely dispersed islands. Geological variation between islands (from high mountainous islands to low coral atolls) • Vulnerable to natural disasters such as typhoons • Heavy dependency on US funding and other external aid • Fishing comprises 80% of exports • Potential to develop fishing and tourism industries • National and state governments employ over 50% of workforce • Agriculture is mainly subsistence farming (bananas, coconuts, breadfruit, betel nut, cassava, taro, kava) • Growing demand for cash to purchase goods, pay bills, make church contributions and to accompany traditional gifts • Increasing urban population places pressure on land resources and causes social tension, including domestic violence • Rising aspirations for wage employment and cash-based lifestyle • Poorly developed infrastructure (primary education, health, water) • Growing inequalities between islands and inhabitants • Low social status of women; limited female representation in government • High levels of debt

The CSO community of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) can be divided broadly into two groups. A majority of CSOs in the country belongs to a group that consists of small organizations which run almost entirely on a voluntary basis. Established as mechanisms to help less fortunate members of society, they generally function to 'do good works'. Only few of them have clear visions, missions and goals. The other group consists of a small number of large CSOs which are well funded and equipped with trained professional staff working in specific sectors. These CSOs have clear missions and goals as part of their strategic plans, and can even match large CSOs in Australia or New Zealand in terms of their capacities for action. They focus primarily on environmental issues⁵ and receive strong support and mentoring by external NGOs like The Nature Conservancy that have their bases in FSM. This support has been instrumental in local environmental CSOs receiving assistance from external agencies such as governments and philanthropic agencies.

There is extreme variability in capacity between these two groups of CSOs in almost every axis of the study (Table 3.1). The smaller CSOs are barely equipped with office infrastructure, and have very low levels of funding. Their members, who are

volunteers, do not possess the skills to develop systems and processes that will optimise the functioning of their organizations. Even in the realm of strategy and planning, the split between the two groups is obvious. While the larger ones have well designed strategic plans, the smaller CSOs tend not to have strategic or operational plans.

This variability in capacity leads to wide ranging impacts. The large CSOs, with their higher levels of performance and outputs, have attained a degree of public recognition. This ensures that they receive funds from external agencies, including donors, which, in turn, sustains their ongoing development. On the other hand, the majority of CSOs operating under constrained circumstances can only deliver at basic levels. Thus they receive very little external support. During the consultation process, donor representatives made it clear that as a general rule of thumb, they do not provide either 'start-up funds' for CSOs, or monies for salaries. The low level of support by external funders has been identified by CSOs as a key reason for their low levels of capacity. The lack of funds means smaller CSOs have no recourse to make necessary investments in their physical or human resources. Many are unable to develop and grow beyond being volunteer organizations.

Table 3.1. FSM CSOs: Capacity Assessment In Five Areas

1. Organizational Development	
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split in terms of strategy is evident between the small group of high-capacity CSOs and the majority with very low capacity.• The large CSOs have well designed strategic and operational plans which provide strong guidance for staff.• While some smaller CSOs may have strategic plans, these are not linked to operational plans or actual operations.
Organizational Culture and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CSOs report on a strong positive organizational culture.• Majority of CSO members are strongly committed volunteers.
Systems and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear lack of CSO capacity in internal systems and processes in the country, except in a very few.• Members of smaller CSOs, which are mainly volunteers, do not possess skills to establish or develop organizational systems and processes.• A majority of CSOs do not possess handbooks/manuals on the operation of various systems and processes in their organizations.• There is often confusion on how to operate standard systems such as financial reporting, leading to systemic gaps.
Outputs and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Variability in capacity between the minority and the majority is apparent in the area of outputs and general performance.• A virtuous circle exists for high-capacity CSOs which have strong ability to deliver outputs, even outperforming Federal and State government agencies in some instances.• These organizations have achieved a high degree of public awareness, which help them receive external funds and contracts. The incoming funds ensure that they further improve on delivery performance.• Smaller CSOs suffer from the opposite of the virtuous circle. Their low levels of internal capacity reflect on their ability to deliver. As a result, there are unable to obtain resources from the funding community.
2. Sustainability And Resourcing	
Infrastructure and Internal Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few large CSOs working in environment have very good infrastructure and internal management structures, with well-stocked offices equipped with IT and office systems. The largest of them own motor vehicles.• Their management structures are set with clearly defined roles for staff.• The majority of CSOs in FSM, however, are smaller organizations with very limited infrastructure. They have no access to computers unless they are personal computers, or via internet cafes.• Many smaller CSOs do not have proper offices. They operate out of homes and maintain basic management structures, and the bare minimum paperwork required to maintain their status as non-profits.• Management structures for these CSOs generally include only a chairperson, treasurer and secretary.

⁵ The one major exception to this is the Micronesian Seminar which is a Jesuit-funded research organization.

Manpower and Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger CSOs have in place solid policies and practices on human resource management, and are able to retain staff in an effective manner. • The majority of CSOs, however, do not have well-established human resource management practices or policies. Even in the case they exist, CSOs do not adhere to them. • Volunteerism appears to be the norm in the CSO sector across the country, with very few of them having non-volunteer staff. For this reason, members do not see a need to have concrete policies and processes on human resource management. • This manpower issue is a real constrain. Smaller CSOs find it difficult to attract new members who are willing to provide the level of input required to keep organizations running. • While they are able to source people (often through friendship networks) to participate in their organizational activities, without the ability to pay for staff services, CSOs are 'stuck' at a certain level of development.
Resource Mobilisation Strategies and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger CSOs are well resourced. One has an annual turnover of over USD 500,000, and receives funds from multilateral and bilateral donors, and from private donors such as the Packard Foundation. • The majority of CSOs are at the opposite of this top end, with little or no regular access to funds. They operate on annual budgets of less than USD 5,000, coming from their own fund-raising events or in-kind support from government agencies. • Smaller CSOs indicated during consultations that funds from donors would enable them to 'kick start' their capacity development process. They also repeatedly emphasised their desire for assistance in writing grant applications, which they identified as an inhibiting factor in accessing donor funds.
3. Information Sharing, Cooperation And Advocacy	
Capacity to use ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the larger CSOs use computers in their work. They have well maintained computer networks, and use various software and hardware packages to communicate both internally and externally. • The smaller CSOs generally do not possess their own computers. Members access computers through via varied means, primarily to communicate with one another. • Members of smaller CSOs who have other jobs (often in government) use their work computers to arrange organizational activities. • Others use computers of family members or friends to coordinate and manage their organizational activities.
4. Stakeholder Relations	
External Relations (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies, end users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large CSOs have well developed relationships with external stakeholders, including with state and federal government agencies. • The largest of them have e-newsletter distribution networks and regular communication with stakeholders, from local communities to regional organizations such as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme. • Smaller CSOs have contact with their direct stakeholders, but their external relationships do not extend beyond them. • They have little contact with government agencies, except in the cases where their members work in government. • A few have contact with Pacific Regional NGOs (PRNGOs), but this is sporadic. During the consultation process, CSOs indicated a feeling the North Pacific was 'out of sight and out of mind' for PRNGOs, which focused largely on the countries of the South Pacific.

5. Legal And Regulatory Environment

- Majority of FSM CSOs are incorporated as non-profit organizations. The steps to register as non-profits and reporting requirements to maintain this status are not particularly difficult.
- Larger environmental CSOs seem to share a high level of trust and good will with state and national governments, which play out in joint work activities.
- CSOs consulted in the study, however, indicated as a group that they receive very little active support from the government.

The CSO community in FSM, however, shares a notable common key strength. This strength is their ability to bring about change in their stakeholder communities. All of the CSOs assessed in this study seemed to 'do a lot' with the funds they received—from the largest CSOs which receive hundreds of thousands of US dollars each year as their operating budget, to the small community CSOs, which function on a budget of one or two thousand US dollars, raised through their own fundraising efforts.

CSOs roll out programmes that result in a range of positive changes for their stakeholders. There is no real duplication of efforts either. While a number of the smaller CSOs have similar mandates (such as alleviating poverty), their limited reach means that their operations do not negatively impact one another.

Capacity Gaps

A number of small CSOs during the consultation process repeatedly raised the question of how they could break out of the negative cycle between low capacity levels and external funding from donors. Their perspective was that the selection processes of donors disproportionately singled them out because they have not developed basic capacity in key areas in the first place, including a modest level of infrastructure and internal governance structures. If they could receive initial disbursement of funds from donors through grants, it would assist in kicking start the process of developing capacity in various areas. To this end, they argued, donors need

to utilise different assessment levels when making decisions on funding. Otherwise, the cycle of funding only 'winners' will continue, while many 'worthy' CSOs with potential to develop and grow would miss out on much needed resources. Developing the capacity to access funds, including skills to write grant applications, is a priority for them (Box 3.1).

Another key weakness identified during the consultation process was the lack of effective coordination within the CSOs community. There was general feeling of discontent with the coordination system of the NLU. CSOs argued that without an effective coordination mechanism within the country, CSOs would lose out on the potential positive benefits associated with collectively lobbying with government or donors.

They identified this gap as a key reason behind the community's state of disarray. A strengthened NLU system would allow them to work more effectively as a network.

Existing Approaches to Capacity Development

Currently there are very few opportunities for capacity development in the FSM CSO community (Box 3.2). Apart from the larger CSOs whose members receive regular on-the-job training, staff members of the smaller CSOs have not received any formal training through external or internal opportunities. An exception is the Diploma Programme in Not-for-Profit Management offered by the New Zealand-

based UNITEC, through which some had received training. A number of individuals are also currently enrolled in the course. This Programme, however, has the capacity to only deal with small numbers at a given time. It also requires expensive travel to the South Pacific from the North Pacific, which is a deterrent.

An approach towards capacity development suggested by larger CSOs (local CSOs and the local branches of international CSOs) during the

consultations was for them to mentor smaller CSOs through the use of peer-learning networks. This opportunity appears potentially promising, particularly given that such a form of engagement does need not require expensive travel outside FSM. It would also ensure the applicability of the training to the FSM environment since the mentoring would be delivered by organizations already operating in-country. However, the standing offers by larger CSOs—in place for a number of years—have not been taken up by the small CSOs in the country.

Box 3.1. What we Need: Desired Capacities of FSM CSOS

The capacities FSM CSOs highlight as key to their development are:

- Increased ability to access funds, including assistance for smaller CSOs to write grant applications
- Increased financial literacy
- Better coordination within the FSM CSO community

Box 3.2. CSO Capacity Development Activities: Highlights

- There is very little occurring in the way of capacity development activities within the FSM CSO community.
- Some funding for capacity development activities had been provided by the NZ Aid Programme over the years, which focused on the country's National Liaison Unit (NLU) and a few key CSOs.
- A small number of individuals are also enrolled in the programme for Graduate Diploma in Not-for-Profit Management conducted by UNITEC.
- Large CSOs undertake capacity development activities for their own staff, in an internal process of 'on-the-job' training.
- The larger CSOs suggested during the consultations that they would be able to provide similar training for the smaller CSOs.

Chapter 4 Republic Of The Fiji Islands

Location:	In the Pacific Ocean to the east of Vanuatu, west of Tonga and south of Tuvalu
Land area:	18,272 km ²
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):	1,260,000 km ² of ocean
Capital:	Suva
Population:	Total population: 883,125 ^{xxii}
Ethnic groups:	Fijian 57.3% (predominantly Melanesian with a Polynesian admixture), Indian 37.6%, Rotuman 1.2%, other 3.9% (European, other Pacific Islanders, Chinese) ^{xxiii}
Languages:	English (official), Fijian (official), Hindustani, Rotuman
Religions:	Protestant 55.4% (Methodist 34.6%, Assembly of God 5.7%, Seventh-Day Adventist 3.9%, Anglican 0.8%, other 10.4%), Hindu 27.9%, Roman Catholic 9.1%, Muslim 6.3%, Sikh 0.3%, other or unspecified 0.3%, none 0.7% ^{xxiv}
Human Development Index (HDI):	Rank: 100 Value: 0.688 ^{xxv}
Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and over):	93.7% ^{xxvi}
Life expectancy at birth (years):	71 ^{xxvii}
Under-five mortality rate:	18 (per 1,000 live births) ^{xxviii}
GDP :	USD 3.869 billion ^{xxix}
GDP per capita:	USD 4,400 ^{xxx}
Economy based on:	Tourism, sugar, garments
Development implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of minerals available (gold, silver and copper on land; gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc in the EEZ) • Vulnerable to natural hazards such as cyclones, hurricanes, storm surge, coastal flooding, river flooding, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions • Political instability has severely affected the economy • Some tension between ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians • Heavy reliance on remittances from overseas workers • Increasing urban migration • Declining Indo-Fijian population due to emigration and low birth rate

Fiji is a large Pacific nation with an equally large number of formal and informal CSOs working on a wide range of issues. The areas of health, education, gender, youth, disability, and environment, human rights, trade and poverty alleviation are all well represented in the CSO community.

All of the Fijian CSOs consulted in this study were established as charitable trusts.⁶ A majority of them possessed organizational vision and mission statements, and organizational goals, ranging from the very sophisticated to the basic (Table 4.1). They also indicated that a human rights-based approach (HBRA) and gender were integrated into their work programmes. Women were significantly represented on boards and in managerial roles, and their strategic documents had references to HRBA as a core foundation for programming decisions.

Fijian CSOs belong either to a group that is urban, large, well established, and well resourced with a mix of paid educated staff and volunteers, or to one that is small, rural, poorly resourced, and staffed by local volunteers. Respectively, they range from those with sophisticated infrastructure on par with small, successful CSOs in Australia or New Zealand, to those with little or minimal infrastructure and internal management structures.

The national CSO sector is relatively well connected and coordinated, and a high level of cooperation exists amongst CSOs. The broader cross-sectoral social service delivery seems to be distributed predominantly through the NLU. Its nine provincial arms also play a significant role, particularly in the areas of youth, health and environment. During the consultations, many CSOs expressed the importance of their membership with the NLU, which seems to be of considerable benefit. This membership is a

source for providing them with regular up-skilling and workshop/networking opportunities. The dissemination of information by the NLU is a source of capacity building for CSOs.

A key strength of Fijian CSOs is their ability to implement positive change in their constituencies. Discussions with the public, government and donor agencies during the consultation process supported statements by CSOs that they were strong advocates for their communities.

Advocacy work is very much an active part of the CSO community's philosophy and strategic vision. All the CSOs interviewed had a clear advocacy focus, and demonstrated high levels of awareness about building long-term support in country to increase community awareness about their causes. The ability of CSOs to raise public awareness and influence decision making level is further demonstrated by their increased inclusion at local and national governmental platforms, and regional and international fora.

Many Fijian CSOs operate well in spite of a lack of formal infrastructure. They quietly get the job done, staffed by volunteers, including governance boards that meet regularly and keep reasonably good records, and in many cases, funded at very low levels by the government. One national CSO, for example, has been operating successfully for over 30 years with minimal infrastructure and a tiny volunteer staff and board.

A considerable resource of CSOs is their impressive spirit of volunteering. CSO staff members are predominantly fulltime volunteers who fall into two categories:

- Older/retired men and women who have personal stake in the cause; and
- Young graduates looking for a first job.

bilateral agencies in Suva. This is an opportunity that does not readily exist in other Pacific nations, and can be viewed as a win-win situation.

This volunteerism must be seen in the context of the country's demography, particular for the latter group. Unlike most of the Pacific, Fiji does not face chronic staff shortages. A high number of educated young people join the workforce every year. Faced with work shortage in the formal sector, they join the CSO sector where they gain valuable work experience, which can later lead to paid employment with larger PRNGOs, international CSOs, or multi or

Another advantage that Fijian CSOs have over other Pacific countries is that their close proximity to PRNGOs and international agencies in Suva results in their inclusion in regional and international fora, and provides a platform for advocacy that may otherwise not be present. It also provides the aforementioned access to well-paid jobs in regional and international agencies for the volunteers working in national CSOs.

Table 4.1. Fijian CSOs: Capacity Assessment In Five Areas

1. Organizational Development	
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• While only the largest CSOs in the study had full strategic plans linked to operational activities, all had some semblance of a strategic plan. Majority of their staff had attended strategic planning sessions/workshops, although CSO that conducted internal planning session were rare.• Large CSOs had excellent one-, three- or five-year plans in place. Strategic plans were usually drawn up by the director/manager rather than in consultation with the board or staff.• While the CSOs interviewed were good at making positive changes on the ground, there was little ability on their part to show how these changes linked to broader changes in the national environment (for example, to the achievement of MDGs). Even when there was awareness about this, CSOs struggled to understand how the link could be achieved.• Funding whims of donors greatly impact CSO organizational strategies. Changing donor priorities mean that CSOs may have to move away from their stated strategic goals in order to access funds.• Many CSOs view this as undermining their strategic planning process.
Organizational Culture and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Without exception, the CSOs interviewed in Fiji demonstrated strong positive organizational culture.• Overall a strong values-based rather than a performance-based culture is prevalent.• This culture holds the organization together, and is an important reason why CSO employees are willing to accept low pay and work so hard.

⁶ The principal legislation governing CSOs and non-governmental organizations in Fiji is the Charitable Trusts Act (1945, Chapter 67), which offers CSOs an opportunity to be incorporated as a charitable trust and be recognized as a voluntary organization. In late 2001, the State de-registered a human rights CSO for challenging the legality of the government and has since threatened to de-register CSOs that oppose the government. At the time the research for this study was carried out, CSOs informed that the government had announced that no more NGOs would be registered within Fiji.

Systems and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems and processes within Fijian CSOs vary greatly. The larger the organization, the more sophisticated its formal systems and processes. • A notable exception is a tiny Western Disabled Persons Association with six volunteer staff servicing 5000 disabled people and their families in the western provinces, which had excellent record systems and processes. • While CSOs have written systems and processes in place, some of these are out of date or inadequate. • There is general concern that CSOs do not possess organizational capacity to successfully keep records of their systems and processes. Even if they do possess capacity, they cannot devote time for this due to occupation with operational issues. • Work in this area, especially in developing capacity for documenting organizational systems and processes, is needed.
Outputs and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs demonstrate a good ability to deliver programmes and/or act as a voice for advocacy. Though outputs and performance are variable, taking into account the resources available for the majority of them, CSOs manage to achieve impressive results. • An example of this comes from the Youth Champs 4 Mental Health, a voluntary youth group which raises awareness on mental health issues. It is a relatively new group, staffed by youth volunteers, which performs throughout Fiji at different events. It has recorded a song which has been picked up by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community as the theme for their mental health awareness campaign. • With very minimal funding and some programme support from Partners in Community Development Fiji, this CSO has not only managed to gain a significant profile for mental health issues, but also communicated this in a manner to which youth respond.
2. Sustainability And Resourcing	
Infrastructure and Internal Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fijian CSOs range from those that maintain minimal operations to those with extensive operations, well-maintained governance structures and reporting mechanisms. • All of the CSOs consulted felt they could benefit from improved structures and processes, from computers, office equipment, buildings, and vehicles to better management/leadership/technical training for staff. • A number of organizations which lacked in formal infrastructure capacity seemed to possess robust internal governance structures, operating and delivering services at a commendable level.
Manpower and Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In contrast to other Pacific countries, there is low staff turnover in Fijian CSOs. There is no shortage of relatively skilled/educated individuals willing to work in them either.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people working as volunteers in national CSOs gain valuable work experience, which can lead to paid employment with international CSOs, PRNGOs, multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors. • Fijian CSOs do not hold a negative view of losing staff to better resourced organizations. They seem proud to utilise the education and skills of young graduates whilst providing them with valuable work skills. • However, poaching of experienced staff from national CSOs can impact their capacity development, by depleting their pool of skilled manpower. • A majority of Fijian CSOs run on the back of volunteers, who are involved at both operational and management/governance levels. Some of these individuals are well-connected and effective leaders. • The risk associated with this kind of volunteerism is when such individuals leave, succession planning becomes a challenge. • The availability of workers also does not negate the need for robust human resources management practices in CSOs. • Apart from large CSOs, there is very little available in the way of developing capacity in the area of human resource management.
Resource Mobilisation Strategies and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs are chronically starved of funds, a problem compounded by a worsening political situation which has seen government coffers dry up. • Fijian CSOs demonstrate extraordinary pragmatism, adjusting according to their environment. All the CSOs interviewed reported that they have not ceased programming. • Large CSOs take advantage of funding opportunities that emerge from government and the bi-laterals and multi-laterals agencies. • The work of smaller national CSOs is localised with little expenditure. Thus they are not as reliant on external handouts. They source funding where they can, and rely on fundraising or private sector assistance. • For larger CSOs, delays in donor funding is a key factor impacting their operations. Time lags between submission of applications and release of funds sometimes seriously affect their ability to maintain staff, cover overheads, and meet objectives in a timely manner. • Even large organizations with excellent planning cycles have fallen victim to donor delays. • National funding is more accessible. The small amount of funding at the local level, often drip fed, can be distributed with relative ease. Since CSOs are sub-contracted by governments, any time lag/risk is carried by government overheads rather than by CSOs. • During the consultations, CSOs as a group expressed the desire for technical assistance in accessing funding, including writing funding proposals. They have little knowledge of sources of available assistance, or how to access them.

⁷ This may have changed since the last constitutional change, which occurred during the in-country consultation process of this study.

3. Information Sharing, Cooperation And Advocacy	
Capacity to use ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT is used for communication by all CSOs. • The internet, particularly e-mail, is the common communication tool. • Few CSOs use ICT for the production of newsletters and promotional material, and for staying connected internationally to expand their knowledge in their work area. • ICT is expensive in the Pacific region, which constrains usage.
4. Stakeholder Relations	
External Relations (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies, end users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All CSOs interviewed had strong networks with stakeholders and identified these links as a key strength. • Strong links also exist within the CSO community and with other social institutions (particularly government counterparts and community networks). CSOs appear to network regularly at local and national levels, and attend regular meeting with other CSOs. • Regular reports go to funders, constituencies, government, and in some cases to CSOs involved in similar work. • Some CSOs maintain an updated calendar of events for its constituents. • Larger CSOs appear well connected to regional and international networks, and many of them keep electronic database of contacts and networks. They are informed about latest techniques/ competencies/policies/trends in their areas of expertise. • Relevant CSOs have beneficial relationships with CROP agencies, and they are regularly informed about their activities through different channels. For example, one CSO has its own communications unit and makes use of the radio through a monthly programme, and television as required. The print media is used extensively to run features and opinion pieces, and it also sends out regular newsletters to 37 villages in Vanua Levi (1000 households).
5. Legal And Regulatory Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steps to register as charitable trusts are not difficult and so do not prove to be an impediment. • CSOs reported unexpectedly good relationships with local and national government bodies. There are no significant issues regarding their regulatory environment, although changes in government mean delays as new ministers and department heads need to be re-educated. • The general feedback from CSOs was that the current legal and regulatory environment in Fiji has improved. For example, many felt they could now complain against government officials.⁷ An overall majority of the CSOs interviewed felt that government is more accommodating. • Many CSOs reported they felt they were 'safe' because they are not political, and therefore were not seen as a problem. During the consultations, they expressed the opinion that if they were seen as political, they would doubtless be hindered in their work. • The VAT tax was a key issue raised by CSOs. For some that have had a long history of receiving donated goods from international bodies and countries, the additional costs of clearing containers is prohibitive. 	

At the same time, it is important to note that the presence of the ‘internationals’ in Fiji is a source of tension. Resentment exists in the national CSO community against internationals who are viewed as irrelevant, and as ‘sponges’ for soaking up the little available donor funding to which local CSOs feel entitled. There is also considerable misinformation among national CSOs about the roles of PRNGOs and internationals CSOs in the country. During the interviews, national CSOs expressed concern about feeling ‘used and abused’ through theft of their intellectual property, and the belief that they are continually passed over (in terms of funding and programme delivery) in favor of the larger, better-resourced PRNGOs. Even the smallest national CSOs struggled to understand the value international organizations bring to their work and their people. The impact of this is serious. The greater ability of international and regional CSOs to deliver vis-à-vis national CSOs is not necessarily conducive to the empowerment of local communities, or to building effective relationships and capacity in the CSO community as a whole. This is an issue that is clearly important to the national CSO community which is experiencing ongoing volatility and instability within both its own community and its larger political environment.

Capacity Gaps

CSOs in Fiji achieve a lot on miniscule budgets, but their service delivery can further improve with access to more resources, training, and technical assistance to develop capacity in a range of priority areas (Box 4.1). Presently, most of the support they receive is channeled through the NLU, or in the case of some, their international parent bodies. CSOs are highly aware of the decreasing availability of funds from government, private sector and donors, particularly in light of the current global financial crisis. Many are caught in the age old ‘catch 22’ position, where they need funding to build their infrastructure and internal governance systems, but are not being eligible for funding unless a minimum level of capacity and accountability are in place.

Generally speaking, Fijian CSOs appear to be more reactive than proactive in terms of seeking funding opportunities. They seek funding on a project by project basis rather than through an annual planning process. Part of this can be attributed to the funding environment, where little domestic funding is available, and partly to the informal structures of CSOs. With very few overheads, the majority of funding sought is for programmes and projects that are developed in an ad hoc manner.

Box 4.1. What we Need: Desired Capacities Of Fijian CSOS

- Fijian CSOs highlight the following as priority areas in their capacity development process:*
- All CSOs can benefit from improved structures and processes, including updating infrastructure and equipment.
 - Majority of CSOs desire technical assistance in accessing funding (including writing funding proposals).
 - Training/technical assistance is also needed in the areas of strategic planning, general management (including setting up systems and processes), financial management and media training.
 - Group training is preferable since they can learn from each other.

During the consultations, some CSOs particularly requested training which is specific to their line of work. This included:

- technical training, in particular GIS mapping, marine survey and design, and climate change assessment with the Pacific Island Applied Geosciences Commission (SOPAC).
- disabled care giving workshop at the Fiji School of Medicine

Associated with funding scarcity is the pervasive insecurity about ongoing sources of funding. A key issue highlighted during the consultation process was the vulnerability of CSOs to the funding whims of donors. (This particular predicament, however, is not limited to Fiji, and given the relatively ‘independent’ nature of many Fijian CSOs, it would be fair to say that they are less at risk than CSOs in other Pacific countries). For some large CSOs, the risk is that donors’ funding priorities are subject to change from one financial year to another, depending on a range of external factors. An example of this is the uncertainty around NZ Aid Programme funding in wake of the change of government in late 2008. Even if organizations possess concrete and robust strategic plans, money from donor sources for a particular year may not align with these stated targets or goals. Therefore, for continual funding, they may have to move away from their strategic plans, and adopt programmes targeted by donors. Many CSOs feel pressured to deliver what they see as the latest ‘trend’ of foreign governments.

Another area that needs capacity development is management in general and financial management in particular. During the consultation process, CSOs repeatedly requested assistance in these areas. Participants also highlighted reporting as an area of weakness, emphasizing the difficulties of reporting in different formats to different stakeholders. The lack of staff with necessary skills for report writing and writing donor funding requests is the key gap here. Monitoring and evaluating is limited to larger CSOs who have frameworks in place for this, while smaller CSOs do not consider this area much of a

priority.

The issue of governance of CSOs, which has significant potential to make or break an organization, is another priority area in Fiji. Organizational boards lack appropriately skilled people, and there exists a general ignorance about the requirement of board members. All CSOs in the study indicated a greater need for management training and civic education in communities. Their perspective was that upskilling community leaders can have widespread benefit for the broader community, including that of CSOs.

Existing Approaches to Capacity Development

There is a vast amount of work going on in Fiji on capacity building in the CSO community (Box 4.2). Every international aid agency has some training programme underway or proposed. These, however, do not appear to be coordinated in any way and seem limited to the Suva CSOs. The lack of coordination and access to these opportunities is resulting in frustration in the wider CSO community in Fiji.

Smaller CSOs which are not privy to large levels of funding from donors find very limited training opportunities, with most of it being facilitated by the Fiji Council for Social Service (FCOSS). There is little access for them to the initiatives provided through PRNGOs or international agencies. Some participants in the consultation process raised the point that it was always the same people who were picked to undergo training, and that the learning gained in the training sessions was seldom shared.

Box 4.2. CSO Capacity Development Activities: Highlights

- A majority of the Fijian CSOs consulted in the study has experienced staff training from national, regional, or international organizations, but these were not coordinated in any way.
- The National Liaison Unit (NLU) is the Fijian counterpart for the CIVICUS capacity building project.
- The NLU clearly possesses the necessary skills, knowledge and staff to up skill local CSOs, but the lack of funding is a key hurdle to undertaking such initiatives.

Chapter 5 Solomon Islands

Location:	In the Pacific Ocean to the east of Papua New Guinea and northwest of Vanuatu.
Land area:	27,556 km2
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):	1,630,000 km2 of ocean
Capital:	Honiara, Guadalcanal
Population:	Total population estimate: 571,890
Ethnic groups:	Melanesian 94.5%, Polynesian 3%, Micronesian 1.2%, other 1.1%, unspecified 0.2%
Languages:	Solomon Islands pidgin (lingua franca); English (official; but spoken by only 1%-2% of the population); 120 indigenous languages
Religions:	Church of Melanesia 32.8%, Roman Catholic 19%, South Seas Evangelical 17%, Seventh-Day Adventist 11.2%, United Church 10.3%, Christian Fellowship Church 2.4%, other Christian 4.4%, other 2.4%, unspecified 0.3%, none 0.2%
Human Development Index:	Rank: 142 Value: 0.510
Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and over):	NA
Life expectancy at birth (years):	74.18
Under-five mortality rate:	36 (per 1,000 live births)
GDP:	USD 1.627 billion
GDP per capita:	USD 2,900
Economy based on:	Fishing, timber, palm oil, coconut, copra
Development implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance between islands • Islands rich in natural resources (lead, zinc, nickel, gold) • Vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunami and cyclones • Unsustainable management of natural resources, especially logging • 1999-2003 civil unrest severely affected infrastructure (roads, sanitation, water), service delivery (education, health), and personal property • Over 80% of the population lives in rural areas • One of the highest population growth rates in the world (2.6%) • Complex communal customary land ownership; land ownership reserved for Solomon Islanders • Cultural diversity between language groups; complex social structure • Electricity only available in five urban centers • Low rates of formal employment; youth unemployment • Majority of population involved in subsistence/cash crop agriculture • Heavy reliance on foreign aid • Rural-urban migration

Solomon Islands CSOs can be roughly split into a group that focuses only on specific sectors and a group which works on broader cross-sectoral issues focusing on social justice-related objectives. While a clear majority of the CSOs consulted in the study possessed basic visions and mission statements, and goals, their practical transition to implementation was limited only to the largest and most well-resourced organizations. In spite of this, a clear strength of Solomon Island CSOs was their ability to implement positive change in their end-user communities. The CSOs reported as a group that their connection to the communities they served was their key strength.

A major challenge facing national CSOs in Solomon Islands lies in that its post-conflict 'failed' country status has made it increasingly attractive for 'foreign' NGOs in recent years. The country provides ample opportunities to do high-visibility 'good' works, and thus their presence is strong in the country. This scenario impacts national CSOs in two ways. First, they cannot compete with external NGOs which have more funds and greater levels of capacity. This difference in the capacity to deliver services has led local communities to question the value created by national NGOs, and consequently,

there has been decline in the latter's legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders.

Second, it has also meant loss of their staff to international agencies that offer better employment packages. International agencies, including bi-lateral agencies such as NZ Aid Programme and AusAID, and multi-laterals such as the UNDP, recruit staff directly from the local CSO ranks, depleting their manpower. During the individual capacity assessment exercise and at the consultation forum, these challenges presented by 'foreign' agencies were key concerns raised by Solomon Islands CSOs.

There is also a degree of competition among national CSOs, particularly over funding (Table 5.1). This is present not only among those working in the same sector, but within the entire CSO community since there are only finite funding sources for the community as a whole. The majority of CSOs in Solomon Islands are starved of funds. Apart from a few which have a solid platform of donor support, CSOs are constantly on the lookout for new funding sources. They are also consistently confronted with uncertainty in the tenure of staff positions due to the uncertainty of funding sources.

Table 5.1. Solomon Island CSOs: Capacity Assessment In Five Areas

1. Organizational Development	
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only the largest CSOs have strategic plans linked to operational plans, although many of them are outdated from 5-6 years ago. There is lack of solid technical knowledge in the creation and implementation of strategic plans. Strategic plans, when present, often do not match organizational capacity to translate them into action. Very few organizations conduct strategic planning workshops. Even those that do, lack staff capacity to link planning to concrete operations. However, lack of formal strategic plans does not impact day-to-day activities of CSOs, since they change little year by year for most. The predominant dependence on donor funding undercuts the utility of strategic planning for CSOs in Solomon Islands. Even those with concrete strategic plans are dependent on donor funding for survival. Adopting programmes approved by donors is thus crucial, although this could involve moving away from stated strategic goals if they are different from those supported by donors, to ensure continued funding. None of the Solomon Islands CSOs consulted in the study (with the exceptions of two which were affiliated with an external NGO) are in a position to refuse funding that does not align with their strategic intent. Thus, within this current scenario, strategic planning is and will continue to be of limited use to CSOs.
Organizational Culture and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong positive organizational culture exists in CSOs. Majority of people work in CSOs because of their commitment to the cause. The degree of uncertainty in the area of funding, which directly links to staff positions, however, adversely impacts staff morale. National CSOs report that they lose staff to foreign CSOs or multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors. Rising living cost in Honiara in recent years leave those employed by local CSOs with few choices. Examples however exist of individuals who subsequently return to national CSOs from international organizations, due to a realization that they are not able to play as active a role in the other organizations.
Systems and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of written systems and processes is a critical weakness for CSOs' long term sustainability. While most CSOs consulted in this study had some form of written systems and processes, these were outdated and inadequate. There is concern among CSOs that they do not possess the capacity to strengthen organizational systems and processes, particularly in recording and documentation.
Outputs and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the whole, CSOs as a group, have a record for delivering outputs and programmes contracted to them by funders or stakeholders. Discussions with stakeholders corroborated this reputation of CSOs.

2. Sustainability And Resourcing	
Infrastructure and Internal Management Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solomon Island CSOs range from those with little formal infrastructure and governance structures, to those with extensive operations, well-maintained governance structures and reporting mechanisms. For the most part, the higher the levels of funding, the larger their infrastructure and more sophisticated their internal management systems. In some cases, initial funding from donors for particular projects reach CSOs, which provides them with initial resources to improve their infrastructure, making them more competitive for future funding. Other CSOs with experienced and skilled staff are also able to create appropriate internal structures and processes required for donor funding. All CSOs consulted desired improvement in their structures and processes.
Manpower and Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are severe constraints in manpower and human resources management. Solomon Islands CSOs operate in an environment where they staff offices with whoever they can get. Staff shortages exist particularly in technical areas such as accounting. Recruitment by international agencies of skilled personnel directly from national CSOs depletes their pool of skilled manpower. There is little available in the way of human resource management (except in the largest CSOs). These issues are generally handled by senior management, which practically means the executive director or equivalent, distracting them from their core duties.
Resource Mobilisation Strategies and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are few domestic sources of funding. The only CSO in the study receiving domestic funds was the National Liaison Unit (NLU) which receives a small subscription fee from its members (not enough to fund its operations if external funding stops). CSOs need to be extraordinarily adaptive in their programming to ensure that they are able to take advantage of funding opportunities that emerge from bi-laterals and multi-laterals. This negatively impacts their ability to pursue programmes they want or for which they strategically plan. CSOs are unable to be proactive in their approach to external funders who have set plans on what they will fund. As a result, CSOs tend to work in which ever areas they are able to obtain funding. The more successful CSOs work across a range of sectors, and become generalists as a means of survival. The loss of diversity in the work programmes of the CSO sector may be detrimental to the community in the long run. A possible outcome of this shift is that as the larger, more successful CSOs draw contracts for programmes in areas outside their original core competencies, they squeeze out smaller CSOs without similar organizational capacity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While donors such as AusAID seem mindful of this, and do attempt to spread their funding across a number of CSOs, at the same time, it is also difficult for donors to fund CSOs which do not possess capacity to perform basic key functions, such as accounting.
3. Information Sharing, Cooperation And Advocacy	
Capacity to use ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the CSOs interviewed used ICT mainly for communication, with the major source being the internet. The internet has limited use for sourcing knowledge for advocacy and programming in Solomon Islands, due to the expense of internet connectivity and accompanying low band width, which makes internet research a time intensive process. There is little to no uptake of ICT in other areas, except in the operation of basic databases. Procuring ICT equipment such as computers is beyond the means of many CSOs, which also cannot afford to regularly update their systems.
4. Stakeholder Relations	
External Relations (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies, end users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs have good relationships with end-users, utilising novel methods, such as the use of two-way radios, to maintain this communication. A main source of interaction is through periodic field visits. Newsletters or public meetings are rarely used, given the cost factor and the geographic spread of Solomon Islands. CSOs have cordial relations with relevant government agencies and generally maintain regular contact. This is to ensure that both sides are aware about the work being done by the other. A degree of competition exists between the two however. In the consultations, CSOs informed that some government agencies are jealous about the resources that come to CSOs from external donors. There is irregular contact between CSOs and regional or international organizations. The exception to this is that the Development Services Exchange (DSE) maintains regular contact with both the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organizations (PIANGO) and CIVICUS. PRNGOs do not seem to have much impact on national CSOs. Their awareness about PRNGOs and their activities is relatively low. There is also low level of engagement between national CSOs and CROP agencies. Contact between them is irregular, occurring once or twice a year. This engagement is mainly associated with information sharing, although some CROP agencies provide funding to some CSOs.
5. Legal And Regulatory Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General consensus amongst CSOs is that the legal and regulatory environment in Solomon Islands is relatively benign. CSOs in the study were all established as charitable trusts. It is not difficult to establish and operate as a CSO in the country. However, once set up, there is very little support by government for their operation. The Ministry of Home Affairs has set up a desk officer to liaise with national CSOs, but very few have actually met the desk officer and many are unaware about the post. 	

Solomon Islands CSOs are not proactive in seeking funding opportunities, partly because there is little available domestic funding. Even for an organization such as the Development Services Exchange (DSE), the peak national NGO body to facilitate development services for NGOs, which is able to utilise a subscription fee from members to complement its external funds, the funding from domestic sources is negligible. The only real sources of funding for CSOs are external donors, whether they are multi-laterals like UNDP, bi-laterals like AusAID or the NZ Aid Programme, or other foreign donors such as OXFAM-NZ. CSOs are thus greatly vulnerable to the whims of the donor community, and this impacts their organizational development in many areas—from strategic planning to their programme operations.

Even in the area of basic infrastructure and management systems, national CSOs face the uncomfortable ‘chicken and egg’ position of needing funding to build their basic infrastructure and internal systems, but being ineligible for it under donor requirements until these very structures are in place. When duplication in work programmes occurs, it is likely a result of the pressure for CSOs to take on programmes necessary for continued funding, irrespective of whether the programmatic focus is within their area of expertise.

Capacity Gaps

There are several capacity challenges which CSOs, as a group, face in Solomon Islands. Some of these, such as the gaps in internal systems and processes, are systemic and exist irrespective of the size and effectiveness of the organization. A telling example comes from a successful national CSO, which has programmes across the country and a strong record of positive outcomes. When the two founders of the organization retired, it went through rapid decline. The organization almost fell apart because the remaining staff did not possess knowledge of how

the organization worked as a whole. They had only been focusing on their particular roles. The downfall of the CSO was halted only after a great deal of work by a new CEO. A lack of formally documented written systems and processes, combined with a lack of succession planning, contributed to its absence of institutional memory at the organizational level. This example demonstrates how the lack of written systems and processes can be a critical weakness for CSOs, even for those that have a record for effectiveness and achievements.

Another key weakness of Solomon Island CSOs is their lack of knowledge and skill in the field of monitoring and evaluation. In order to comply with the accountability requirements of funders, CSOs are required to regularly report on progress. Funders only provide limited support to CSOs for fulfilling these requirements so the process requires a great deal of effort on the part of CSOs. Their lack of skills means CSOs spend a substantial amount of time working on compliance forms, taking their focus away from important operational management issues. CSOs are also aware of their lack of capacity in evaluating their own operations. There are currently no clear ways for CSOs to assess which of their programmes are working, and the reasons behind this. During the consultation, all CSOs strongly indicated that upskilling in the field of monitoring and evaluation was an important need.

Another area of capacity deficit is that of strategic planning. As highlighted in Table 5.1, while a number of CSOs have strategic plans, these are either outdated or have no provisions for transforming into operational plans. Strategic plans that are in place are also generally ill-suited to organizational capacity. They are written more as inspirational documents. While strategic plans can be drafted at inspirational levels, this needs to be done within a realistic framework of the organization’s capacity.

In addition, members of governance boards clearly lack skills to carry out their responsibilities and provide strategic inputs. They do not regularly attend meetings, and since there is no training available for them, are uninformed about their roles and the expectations out of them. In order to make strategic planning truly useful and meaningful for CSOs, donors will also have to be more open and informed about how to increase the effectiveness of local CSOs, rather than then superimposing their priorities on them.

Solomon Island CSOs face a lack of coordination and communication within its own community, and with their regional partners and the broader international community. During the consultations, CSOs identified this as a priority area for action (Box 5.1). While the NLU is able to help overcome some of these communication issues, recent events within the Unit (such as the organization losing almost all of their staff in the past four years) mean that it does not currently possess the capacity to solely fulfill this function. One approach to cover communication and coordination gaps that was raised during the consultation process was the possibility of establishing a centralised web page, where national CSOs could log data about their activities as a way of information dissemination.

Existing Approaches to Capacity Development

There are limited opportunities for capacity development in the CSO community, especially in light of the fact that CSO staff members often have

to take on additional duties outside their area of expertise due to high staff turnover (Table 5.2). Many of them are working in jobs for which they received little or no formal training. Focused training for existing staff can go a long way in helping staff upskill for additional responsibilities. So far, such opportunities have been very limited.

The majority of staff members who participated in this study had not undergone formal training of any sort. Some had taken part in sporadic training sessions provided by donors, while a few had participated in UNITEC’s Graduate Diploma Programme in Not-for-Profit Management. These numbers compared to the total number of staff members, however, was low. Moreover, the UNITEC programme, while being beneficial and useful, was found to be too expensive by participants. Attending the programme also meant relocation out of their jobs, which was a problem for organizations facing chronic understaffing.

There are cases where training in CSOs occurs informally and at a peer-to-peer level. It is a form of interaction where the more experienced staffer mentors others within the organization whenever time permits. In some organizations, overseas volunteers are also actively working to increase capacity, but this is on an ad hoc basis and unsustainable. The role of peer-peer networks is the area that needs further examination in the context of developing CSO capacity in Cook Islands. It could provide an important platform for up-skilling in different priority areas.

Box 5.1. What We Need: Desired Capacities Of Solomon Island CSOs

Key internal capacities identified as priority for Solomon Island CSOs are:

- Improvement in infrastructure (computers, office equipment)
- Development of technical skill levels of staff (especially financial management and monitoring and evaluation)
- Development of general skills through training (in internal staff management and leadership)
- Development of planning skills (to link strategic planning to operational planning)
- Improvement in governance via selection of better board members and their training
- Better coordination within the Solomon Islands CSO community
- Better communication with external stakeholders

Box 5.2. CSO Capacity Development Activities: Highlights

- Only the largest CSOs are able to address issues on capacity gaps through capacity development activities. Lack of funding and capable staff to conduct internal training are main reasons.
- A degree of informal peer-mentoring occurs in a few CSOs, among staff and among senior members of various CSOs.

Chapter 6 Tonga

Location:	In the Pacific Ocean to the south of Samoa and south-east of Fiji.
Land area:	747 km ²
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):	700,000 km ² of ocean
National Capital:	Nuku'alofa, Tongatapu
Population:	Total population estimate : 105,916 ^{xxxxix}
Ethnic groups:	Polynesian (Tongan 97%, part-Tongan 1.6%), European 0.6% ^{xl}
Languages:	Tongan, English
Religions:	Free Wesleyan Church 37.3%, Latter Day Saint 16.8%, Roman Catholic 15.6%, Free Church of Tonga 11.4%, Church of Tonga 7.1% (and 10 other religious faiths with less than 3% each) ^{xli}
Human Development Index:	Rank: 90 Value: 0.704 ^{xliii}
Adult literacy rate both sexes(% aged 15 and above):	99 ^{xliiii}
Life expectancy at birth (years):	72.3 years ^{xliv}
Under-five mortality rate:	19 (per 1,000 live births) ^{xlv}
GDP:	USD 751 million ^{xlvi}
GDP per capita:	USD 6,100 ^{xlvii}
Economy based on:	Remittances, tourism, fish, squash, vanilla beans, yams.
Development implications:titii	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing deforestation as land is cleared for agriculture• No mineral resources but has fertile soil and fisheries• Vulnerable to natural disasters such as cyclones• Majority of population depends on subsistence farming and fishing• Highly dependent on remittances and overseas aid• Shortage of land on Tongatapu• There are no patent laws in Tonga• High level of youth unemployment• Tourism, fisheries and forestry have potential for development• Although Tongan woman hold a higher social status than men in tradition, it is not reflected in their ability to own land or in political representation

Tonga has a large number of formal and informal CSOs operating on a wide range of focus areas. Tongan CSOs seem to have a good understanding and awareness of the MDGs. While they may not explicitly base their work around the MDGs, they are an intrinsic part of CSO programming.

The majority of Tongan CSOs in the study fell in the emerging stage of organizational development, where they are developing some capacity in specific areas (Table 6.1). Four large CSOs fell in the expanding range of capacity development, with a track record of achievements. All of them possessed organizational visions and mission statements, and associated goals.

The national CSO sector is well connected. Although duplication exists, there is also a higher than usual level of cooperation among CSOs. CSOs are generally aware of what other organizations are doing and they work in a collaborative way to maximise impact on their communities. Tongan CSOs identified their dedicated staff and their strong networks as major strengths.

Many of the organizations expressed the importance

of their membership with the NLU, which seems to benefit them considerably in terms of accessing opportunities for regular up-skilling, attending workshop/networking opportunities, and information dissemination. The broader cross-sectoral social service delivery is distributed predominantly through the NLU and its members. Areas such as health, education, gender, youth, disability, and environment, human rights, trade and poverty alleviation are all well represented. The ability of CSOs to raise public awareness on matters of importance to their constituents was acknowledged by public, government and donor agencies during the consultation process of this study.

There is a degree of competition among Tongan CSOs over the very limited available funding. However, CSOs in the country have an impressive ability to get the job done despite constraints. This is not to say that their service delivery could not further improve with access to additional resource, training and technical assistance. Presently most of the support they receive is channeled through their NLU, or in the case of some CSOs, through their international parent bodies.

Table 6.1. Tongan CSOs: Capacity Assessment In Five Areas

1. Organizational Development	
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tongan CSOs possess strategic plans in some form but only the large ones have full strategic plans that were linked to operational plans. The majority of CSOs interviewed had at one stage or another attended strategic planning sessions/workshops, and many conducted planning sessions with staff. Strategic plans were usually drawn up by the director/manager in consultation with the board and staff. Linking strategy to operation plans is an issue for CSOs. While they are good at making positive changes on the ground there is weakness in their ability to show how these changes link to broader strategic changes. Uncertainty of funding sources impacts strategic planning. For the large CSOs, the risk on being dependent on external funding is that donor priorities can change from one financial year to another. Thus even if they possess concrete and robust strategic plans, the money available from traditional donor sources for that year may not align with the targets of foreign donors. CSOs which wish to continue receiving funds must align their programmes with those of donors to continue accessing funds. This inevitably undermines CSO strategic planning processes.
Organizational Culture and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strong values-based rather than a performance-based culture prevails in Tongan CSOs. All CSOs in the study reported a positive organizational culture. Members are predominantly fulltime (paid and volunteers) and committed to the CSO's particular cause. The issue of high turnover of staff to international CSOs and donors agencies exists, but there appears to be no shortage of skilled/educated individuals in the CSO sector.
Systems and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems and processes within Tongan CSOs vary, and larger the organization, the more sophisticated their formal systems and processes. Most of the CSOs consulted had appropriate systems and processes in place, although some were outdated. CSOs identified the need to strengthen their formal systems and processes, particularly their documentation and recording.
Outputs and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tongan CSOs demonstrate a good ability to deliver programmes and advocate for their issues. Though outputs and performance are variable, a majority of CSOs have achieved impressive results considering their scarce resources.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An example of this comes from a voluntary youth group of the Tongan Family Health Association, which travels the country to perform at different events raise awareness on family planning and promote safe sex among young people. It has recorded songs and its DVDs are widely-circulated. With very minimal funding, the group has managed to gain a significant profile for family planning and health issues in a short period.
2. Sustainability And Resourcing	
Infrastructure and Internal Management Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tongan CSOs range from those with little formal infrastructure or internal governance structures, to those with extensive operations with well-maintained structures. A number CSOs in the study, although lacking in formal infrastructure, possessed robust internal governance structures and were delivering services at a commendable level These CSOs were funded at very low levels by government or members fees and staffed by volunteers, including governance boards that met regularly and kept reasonably good records. All CSOs consulted indicated they would benefit from improved structures and processes, including updates in infrastructure (computers, office equipment, buildings, and vehicles) to better management/technical training within internal staff structures.
Manpower and Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A majority of CSOs have good human resource processes and procedures in place including job descriptions, contracts, and clearly defined systems of measuring staff performance. Staff members appear to be involved in many aspects of planning and implementation. CSOs also demonstrate effective approaches to reaching their targets (i.e. participatory methods). Use of local capacities (financial/human/other resources) is prevalent as is the capacity to coordinate activities between the field and the office. Most organizations seem to have capability to train their own staff but external training is necessary. The research from Tongan CSOs shows that staff members who have undergone capacity building initiatives improve in performance overtime. All CSOs interviewed had at least one volunteer as a part of core staff or board member. CSOs have from high staff turnover. There is also capacity weakness in the area of succession planning. While CSOs indicated in the study that their staff, for the most part, had necessary skills to do their jobs, constraints on funding and staffing mean that the area of human resource management is either neglected or handled by people (in senior management) who may not be trained for it.

Resource Mobilisation Strategies and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs are chronically starved of funds, a situation exacerbated by the country's political circumstances. Irrespective of this, all but one of the CSOs interviewed indicated that they had not ceased programming. Since much of their work is small scale, many CSOs are not as reliant on external handouts for their programming. CSOs source funding where and when they can, many of them relying on fundraising or private sector assistance. Large CSOs take advantage of funding opportunities that emerge from government and the bi-laterals and multi-laterals agencies. The majority of CSOs in the study expressed the desire for technical assistance around accessing funding, and indicated this could be delivered through local workshops by Civil Society Forum of Tonga (CSFT). CSOs appear to have little knowledge of available funding assistance and how to access it.
3. Information Sharing, Cooperation And Advocacy	
Capacity to use ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs, particularly the large ones, are informed about latest techniques/ policies/trends in their area of expertise. They regularly access relevant information and experience, and have access to internet and e-mail, while some have regular radio and TV spots (bi-weekly) and newsletters. CSOs maintain a regular database of relevant contacts and networks, as well as an updated calendar of events. They make good use of communication tools on very limited budgets, and often in inventive ways. One CSO with no media budget regularly wrote controversial press statements that were picked up by radio and TV.
4. Stakeholder Relations	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, there are strong links within the CSO community and with other social institutions (particularly with government counterparts and community networks). CSOs appear to network regularly at local and national levels, and their broader visibility is high Large CSOs are well connected to regional and international networks. There appears to be regular reports by CSOs on their respective work to funders, their constituencies, and government (where applicable), and in some cases, to CSOs in the same sectors. CSOs have beneficial relationships with CROP agencies, where relevant, although the majority of their communication is confined to information received through the National Liaison Unit (NLU).

5. Legal And Regulatory Environment

- All the CSOs in the study were established as incorporated societies. There appears to be no particular barriers for registering as national CSOs, and the processes of registration do not prove to be an impediment.
- CSOs in the study without exception agreed that the legal and regulatory environment in Tonga has improved, and is now more supportive.
- Some reported that there is still an element of suspicion that sometimes impacts their effectiveness (for example, the lack of freedom of speech provisions in the constitution).

Capacity Gaps

One of the key issues that came out in the consultation process was the vulnerability of CSOs to the funding whims of the donors. The uncertain funding environment plays a large part in the operation modality of CSOs. Generally speaking, CSOs are reactive rather than proactive in terms of looking for funding opportunities, and in terms of planning how they can make the kinds of changes they want to see in Tongan society. They tend to look for funding on a project by project basis rather than through an annual planning process. With very few overheads, the majority of funding sought is for programmes and projects, which are developed in an ad hoc manner.

These challenges contribute to staff insecurity and high staff turnover. During the consultations, CSOs stressed on the importance of seeking diversity of funding sources, as well as on the need of staying informed about changes in national government and on the international front (such as the current

global financial situation).

Financial management and management in general are areas that need major capacity development. CSOs reported that while they are knowledgeable about their issue areas or work sectors, learning how to run an organization was where they most needed assistance. CSOs repeatedly requested technical assistance in this area during the consultations (Box 6.1).

Reporting is a weakness for many CSOs, particularly since it is difficult and time consuming to report in different formats to different stakeholders. This problem is compounded by the lack of staff with skills in both report writing and writing donor funding requests. Monitoring and evaluating for donors is limited to the larger CSOs, and they have frameworks in place for this. Smaller CSOs considered monitoring and evaluation frameworks as desirable but not a priority.

Box 6.1. What We Need: Desired Capacities Of Tongan CSOS

The desired capacities of Tongan CSOs are:

- *More coordination among agencies delivering training initiatives and access to these opportunities.*
- *Technical assistance in strategic planning and proposal writing. During the consultations, many CSOs expressed concern that proposal writing and reporting took up a substantial amount of time due to their lack of skills.*
- *Technical assistance in financial management and general management training (including setting up systems and processes). Group training is preferred to individual training in order to learn from each other.*

The issue of governance, particularly relating to organizational boards, is a significant capacity weakness for Tongan CSOs. The lack of appropriately skilled people for board memberships and information deficit about the requirements of board members add to this problem. CSO boards are generally made up of volunteers who do not understand the requirements of the post or possess knowledge to provide advice and direction to CSO managers. In some cases, some CSO boards were identified as being too “nice” while others were identified as “ruling with an iron fist”. At the consultations, CSOs emphasised on a greater need for governance training and civic education. They all identified training for governance boards as a priority.

Existing Approaches to Capacity Development

While there seems to be ongoing capacity development activities for CSOs, there is a lack of coordination among agencies so that the recipients who need them most do not necessarily receive them (Box 6.2).

Tongan CSOs are innovative when it came to seeking proactive ways of pursuing opportunities to upskill staff members. They approach opportunities with a perspective to maximise the benefits of every engagement in a practical and cost effective way. During the consultations, for example, some suggested that if they were in Fiji for a workshop an opportunity, they would stay on an extra week and attach themselves to a PRNGO to make use of the latter’s broad network of connections.

The lack of coordination and access in training delivery, however, is resulting in increasing frustration in the Tongan CSO community. Some CSOs commented during the consultations that it was always the same people who were picked to undergo training and that this learning was not widely shared. For the smaller CSOs which do not have access to donor funding, training opportunities are limited to those facilitated by the NLU. They have little or no access to the training provided through international agencies.

Box 6.2. CSO Capacity Development Activities: Highlights

- *The majority of CSOs interviewed had undergone training from national, regional, and in some cases, international organizations.*
- *Capacity development activities are however not conducted in a coordinated manner.*
- *It was evident from the interviews that the National Liaison Unit (NLU) possessed the skills and knowledge to aid local CSOs upskill at a moderate level. It however lacks funding to undertake such activities.*

Chapter 7

Tuvalu

Location:	In the Pacific Ocean between Samoa and the Solomon Islands.
Land area:	26 km2
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):	757,000 km2 of ocean
Capital:	Fongafale, Funafuti
Population:	Total population estimate: 10,544
Ethnic groups:	Polynesian 96%, Micronesian 4%
Languages:	Tuvaluan, English, Samoan, Kiribati (on the island of Nui)
Religions:	Church of Tuvalu (Congregationalist) 97%, Seventh-Day Adventist 1.4%, Baha'i 1%, other 0.6%
Human Development Index (HDI):	Rank NA
Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and over):	NA
Life expectancy at birth (years):	67.2
Under-five mortality rate:	35 (per 1,000 live births)
GDP:	USD 36 million
GDP per capita:	USD 3,400
Economy based on:	Copra, fishing license sales, postage stamps, internet suffix sales
Development implications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Few natural resources; no streams or rivers• Low-lying atolls and islands susceptible to rising sea levels• Poor soils• Vulnerable to natural disasters such as cyclones• Majority of population depends on subsistence farming (coconuts, taro, pandanus fruit, bananas) and fishing• High level of imports, especially food and fuel• Two-thirds of formal employment is in the government sector• Remote location inhibits development of tourism industry• High dependence on foreign aid and remittances• High cost of basic services, particularly power, water, education, transport, and telecommunications• Tuvalu Trust Fund (1987) provides an economic safety net• Low social status of women; Tuvalu Constitution does not guarantee freedom from discrimination based on sex• Increasing migration to Funafuti and rising population density• Rising income and development gap between Funafuti and outer islands• Rising debt levels

The CSO community in Tuvalu possesses certain integral strengths. Given the small size and closeness of Tuvaluan society, ‘everyone basically knows everyone’ and people are inclined to help one another. These close community ties aid CSOs in mobilising resources, particularly labour, in times of need. A telling example comes from a small CSO with only three female staff members. The CSO needed to remove a large tree in order to make a pathway to its building entrance. Since the activity was labour intensive they appealed for help from their local community members whose response was quick and effective. They not only removed the tree but laid a stone path in a very short time span, without any remuneration. Poorly-resourced CSOs, many of whose activities are limited to basic programmes, receive such support from their larger community.

CSOs in Tuvalu have strong local networks through which they obtain financial assistance. The large CSOs in Tuvalu also have strong networks with organizations abroad, largely enabled by ICT infrastructure. This keeps them up to date on the latest knowledge developments in their field, and provides information about funding opportunities.

Although tension in relations with government does exist in certain cases, there have also been instances where contact with the government in advocacy work has yielded fruitful results. A CSO that lobbied the government on NGO and tobacco issues considers its efforts being influential in the passing of the Incorporation of NGO Act 2007, and the Tobacco Control Act 2008.

Tuvaluan CSOs show diversity in their programmatic work areas, ranging from youth and health to

poverty and spiritual development. In general, the MDGs do not seem to be a determining factor in CSO programming. Only one CSO in the study appears to have consciously made an effort to incorporate the MDGs into its operations.⁸ CSOs also did not have clear statements of visions, missions, and goals, except for one. While some were at drafting stage, they were clearly absent in a few organizations.⁹ A reason behind the gap in written statements and documented goals is that urgent capacity needs—such as office space or electricity—is the primary focus of CSOs. Drafting or documenting specific organizational information seems irrelevant, at least to them, in the light of such basic capacity gaps.

Another key factor behind this gap is cultural. One of the CSOs in the study without a mission statement or documented goals was a kinship organization whose members traced their roots to a common ancestor, and which met at irregular intervals for family get-togethers. As a kinship organization, its purpose was primarily to keep the family together. Translating this into a statement of vision, missions, and goals is not particularly relevant in this context, and probably not desirable. This case conveys the complex cultural dynamics that are present in the Tuvaluan CSO community.

The issue of context—both cultural and otherwise—is an important factor to consider when assessing Tuvaluan CSOs (Table 7.1). It is not only relevant in terms of the broader environment in which CSOs operate, but also in the manner in which CSOs assess themselves. Planning activities of CSOs, for example, can sometimes be influenced by Tuvaluan customary practices which tend to give more opportunities to male discussions. When there are meetings, the

⁸ Four other CSOs listed a number of MDGs as being important considerations, but did not set their objectives around them. Two CSOs did not find any commonalities between their operations and the MDGs, and one other had not even heard of them.
⁹ Only one organization could clearly state what these were, while the heads of two others could highlight some components; others were at various states on drafting at the time of the in-country interviews. Two CSOs did not have statements of vision, mission and goals.

key decision-making group sits in an inner circle surrounded by other participants and observers. Often, this inner circle is reserved for leading males, and although women are present, they do not have the same representation as males. At the same time, this aspect needs to be seen in light of kinship ties present in most Pacific island cultures, where an absence of physical female representation does not mean necessary imply lack of their inputs. Such inputs are often achieved through alternate means, such as through advice given by sisters to their brothers, and/or wives to their husbands. In some cases, the brothers hold their sisters in such high respect, in particular their older sisters, that they

convey what their sisters' viewpoints even if it differs from their own.

Context is also important when examining CSOs' self-assessments in a number of areas. One CSO, when asked about their system for appraising staff performance, responded that they "observe each other's behavior". Instead of a system of pre-determined putative measures to address problematic staff performances, CSOs tend to adopt a more flexible holistic evaluation of the situation. The main principle applied in such cases is "common sense," and this seems to work effectively in the close-knit community-oriented setting in which CSOs operate.

Table 7.1. Tuvalu CSOs: Capacity Assessment In Five Areas

1. Organizational Development	
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO strategic plans match their size and their resources, and thus easily translate them to operational plans. The process of translating plans is backed by strong proposals and intervention frameworks. Most CSOs include measurable objectives into their operational plans. They regularly hold annual review programmes indicating that they are aware of the progress of their programmes. CSOs also use the information gained from internal and external monitoring and evaluation exercises to inform their operations.
Organizational Culture and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational culture of CSOs is community oriented. A strong sense of kinship exists among staff members. In many of the CSOs consulted, the president or CEO viewed staff as family. There is clear exchange of information among staff members due to their small number and their strong personal bonds. Resolution of conflict occurs through common sense and personal discussions, not through formal processes and protocols. In general, the small size of CSOs makes it easy for all staff to be involved in planning activities. However since many staff members are volunteers with paid-employment elsewhere, their involvement in planning organizational activities is limited. Engagement in planning activities is also influenced by constraints such as time factor and available resources to facilitate staff attendance.
Systems and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-developed CSOs have monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, such as audit checks and submitting regular reports since they receive donor funding and have to be accountable.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The systems and processes for measuring staff performance mostly involve staff members assessing one another. This is done not so much in order to critique, but to ensure that colleagues are provided assistance if required. Some developed CSOs with funding from external donors do have formal staff appraisal systems. One such CSO, for example, regularly appraised staff performance by having a board member meet with staff to discuss their assessment of the CEO. Likewise, the board member discussed staff performance with the CEO. In case of outstanding issues, the board member meets with parties involved, and may also take the issue to the board. Funding, particularly from external donors, are factors that differentiate CSOs that have these formal systems from those that lack them.
Outputs and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The more developed CSOs are productive in their ability to undertake projects and programmes. One CSO in the study had four staff who work full time on separate projects funded from external donors. It had two administrative staff, one of whom was the accountant, and the other, the office manager. All staff reported to the CEO, whose main focus was to find funding for the organization. At the other end of the spectrum are small CSOs whose members work together on the same project. In one small CSO there was no division of labor. Staff member took turns on doing required tasks, such as maintaining the cleanliness of their premises.
2. Sustainability And Resourcing	
Infrastructure and Internal Management Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSOs do not have elaborate management structures. Most have a simple structure with members deferring to just one person in charge. Infrastructure capacity of CSOs varies, from the well-resourced with clear-cut internal management systems to those that are minimally-resourced. One of the CSOs in the study had a building without any amenities, including electricity. On the other hand, a well-equipped CSO's facilities included personal desk space for every staff member, computers, access to printer, fax machines, the web, email and other essential field equipment.
Manpower and Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSO range between those staffed by volunteers and those who are paid from external funding sources. Human resource management in volunteer-based CSOs is determined by common sense and a spirit of kinship. Staff members are not subjected to high levels of scrutiny, and there are also no specific qualifications required for holding positions. The main requirement is commitment. Small CSOs that rely on volunteers can also mobilise free labour resources without much difficulty, due to community support.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger well-resourced CSOs may not do this with the same ease since they are known to already possess resources, and there may be expectations of remuneration. Three CSOs consulted in this study had full time paid employees forming the bulk of their staff. These organizations had strict human resource management systems. • One CSO had a staff member whose remuneration was provided by the community. The pay was not at a particular level and depended on the community's generosity.
Resource Mobilisation Strategies and Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many CSOs regard the regulation process that oversees their application for receiving external funding as very problematic. • Funding applications must pass through two internal checkpoints before it reaches overseas donors, and funding must pass through the same checkpoints before they can receive it.¹⁰ • Larger CSOs with well-established systems are more likely to mobilise funds than their poorer counterparts which rely on the goodwill of their members. These CSOs however do not have formal systems, processes or mechanisms to ensure that such financial requests will be met. • While such informal systems are unstable and unreliable, it functions sufficiently in so far as CSOs operations remain flexible. In the case of an expansion of operations, however, adopting formalised systems will become necessary. • The more developed CSOs have regular budget cycles and clear avenues to ensure accountability for budget items.
3. Information Sharing, Cooperation And Advocacy	
Capacity to use ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of ICT by CSOs is restricted by the ICT capacity of the country as a whole. The ICT infrastructure in Tuvalu is not always reliable, and there are periods when internet services do not work. • Less-developed CSOs do not have access to email, internet. • Some larger CSOs use internet facilities, but mostly for overseas correspondence, and only when the systems are up and running. Thus the primary form of communication between CSOs and their members is through newsletters and meetings. Tuvalu does not have a local television station, and as such, when CSOs need to make a public announcement, they rely on the radio. • Some also have access to computer software such as Microsoft Office and MYOB. However, participants indicated during the consultations that many did not have time to undertake the training necessary to learn and utilise them. • The financial officer of a developed CSO pointed out that although they have MYOB software, they continue to use older financial management software because no one had undergone MYOB training.

¹⁰ An application must be submitted to an umbrella CSO, which then submits it to the government. Only after the government approves the application, can it be forwarded to the relevant funding source. If funding is approved, it is channeled back into Tuvalu through the government to the umbrella body, which passes it to the CSO. CSOs complain that this is a cumbersome process and causes delays in receiving funds. A CSO noted during the consultations that the government also ranks the proposals before it determines which ones are sent off to donors.

4. Stakeholder Relations	
External Relations (donors, government counterparts, partners, networks, CROP agencies, end users)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the CSOs have stakeholder relations, which include those with sources outside of Tuvalu, government, local organizations and businesses, and community groups.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the CSOs hold some form of relationship with the government. The government is an important source of funding for CSOs; nearly all CSOs interviewed for this study received some kind of government grant.¹¹ • At the same time, there is sometimes tension in the relationship between CSOs and the government. For example, a CSO's incoming funds from an overseas aid agency were withheld by the government for over a year. • Contact with external donors is primarily for CSOs that are well developed and have considerable resources. They have the communication infrastructure and networks, and the financial resources, to make overseas calls or send staff to meetings with external donors.
5. Legal And Regulatory Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs consulted in the study did not have legal status of any kind at the time of the interviews. A key reason for this is that the relevant legislation, Incorporation of NGO Act 2007, had been passed but not yet been enforced. • Legal status is clearly not an important issue with CSOs, and does not appear to either hinder or help their operations. There seems to be confusion, lack of awareness, and general disregard among the CSOs about registering their legal status. Whether this situation will change when the Act comes into force is uncertain, but its passing indicates that legal issues regarding CSO status will at least become clearer. • The broader regulatory environment can sometimes be an impediment to CSOs. According to some CSOs during the consultations, the most problematic issue is the aforementioned regulation on application for external funds. • CSOs also noted that the government's strong hold over the media, in particular the radio, can interfere with advocacy work. • Critical views of government policies were sometimes censored. For example, the government is particularly sensitive about climate change issues and migration, and views alternative to government positions on these issues have been heavily censored. This is an important issue for CSOs, many of whom are under-resourced and cannot afford to take legal challenges against the government. 	

Contextual observation also applies in the area of linking strategic planning to operational activities on which Tuvaluan CSOs, from the largest and most well-resourced CSOs to the smallest ones, rated themselves highly. This assessment has to take into account the kinds of strategic plans each organization formulates. The smallest CSO in the

study, for example, set very basic strategies, such as keeping a safe and clean environment or acquiring items such as electricity, a computer, pens, pencils, books, in order to provide services to their members. Their strategies did not go beyond this level, and were thus easily translated into operational activities. On the other hand, one of the large CSO's

¹¹ All CSOs interact with particular ministries which match their areas of expertise. These ministries include the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs, the Environment Department, Ministry of Natural Resources, and the Fisheries Department.

ambitious strategies included diversifying its list of projects, upskilling staff members through overseas training courses, and soliciting financial assistance from external aid donors.

Even in the case of obtaining baseline data, CSOs in Tuvalu—whether those with good infrastructure or without—were confident they had systems in place to obtain relevant baseline data for their operations. (The only CSO that rated itself poorly in this capacity measure was one that was recently established). This uniformity in self-assessment is again likely due to the kind of baseline data each CSO requires. A large CSO in the country, for example, which has over 95 percent of the population as its members, gathers data on diverse issues such as the social, economic, spiritual needs of members both locally and internationally, the capacity of institutions to meet them, and the extent of assistance from overseas members and donor agencies. The CSO's support structure includes well-equipped buildings, ample staff, property in Tuvalu and abroad, and technical communication networks. At the other of the spectrum is a CSO with three staff members (who are paid by community donations), which operate out of a building without electricity. Being a learning institution, the kind of baseline data it requires is minimal—the age and basic educational needs of members, which they obtain by members simply filling out an information sheet.

Most CSOs relying on donations and funds from community members or governments also consider themselves to have sufficient resources for their operations, which are minimalist by nature in the first place. Even in terms of outputs and performances, CSOs appear satisfied in terms of what they can produce with the resources on hand. For the most part, they base their operating systems and programmes according to their organizational structure and capacity. Thus their self-assessment

is satisfactory when viewed from this contextual perspective.

If some of these CSOs are to expand or diversify their programmes, however, adoption of more formalised mechanisms and systems will become necessary. During the consultations, there was undoubtedly a sentiment among the less-resourced CSOs that they could set more ambitious goals if they had additional resources. For example, a CSO which works on environmental issues does so without a proper office space or equipment and staffed entirely by volunteers. Although its members would like to address the myriad of environmental problems in Tuvalu, including rising sea levels, severe weather and related social and economic problems, they settle for identifying a few tasks that they can realistically achieve in the absence of basic organizational resources.

Capacity Gaps

A key weakness identified by most CSOs in the study was their lack of and uncertainty about funding. For some smaller CSOs, funds to acquiring basic office equipment, and in some cases, office space, are urgent needs. Others are concerned about what will happen to their operations when current funding ceases. Funding constraints impact developing capacity in other areas such as human resources, the lack of which is another key capacity weakness. Most Tuvaluans undertake post-secondary school training overseas. (Although there is a local University of South Pacific training centre, it does not offer the full range of courses in the same capacity as that of the USP in Fiji and other overseas training and educational institutions). Qualified Tuvaluans who are trained overseas can find employment abroad, or are likely to end up working for government or other local enterprise that provides paid employment if or when they return. They are not likely to take on voluntary and unpaid work. Access to funds could

provide opportunities for CSOs to train and upskill their current staff, or, opportunities for training could also open up through strengthened networks with donor agencies (Box 7.1).

Shortage of qualified staff is compounded by the issue of migration, which is an area of concern for CSOs. With job opportunities not be as abundant in Tuvalu as in other parts in the region such as Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia, many Tuvaluans are migrating. Funafuti, where many jobs are located, shows clear signs of population congestion and land shortages. Rising sea levels exacerbate the problem, fuelling local desire to migrate overseas.

While most CSOs in the study considered the area of strategic planning as one that needed development, at the same time, they did not appear to initiate activities towards this goal. Because they had to survive on low levels of funding and the services of volunteers, their focus was on more immediate tasks.

Governance issues, which are handled very informally, will demand greater attention if CSOs expand operation. Currently, meetings among staff members and between staff and boards are sufficient to establish governance and management procedures. While some well-developed CSOs have formal procedures documented, this is absent in smaller and/or less-developed CSOs. Documentation on governance structures and systems will become necessary in case of expansion, especially if or when they seek donor funding.

The weakness in ICT infrastructure of the country as a whole impacts the capacity of CSOs to fully make use of ICT. The main issue with communication and coordination is whether the country can install a broader telecommunication and ICT infrastructure at all. Not only is the ICT infrastructure in Tuvalu often unreliable, its usage is restricted because of overall uneven infrastructural development in the country. In the urban areas, particularly in the island of Funafuti, there is developing ICT infrastructure. Many people have personal computers with access to emails and online avenues for communications. Many other islands, however, do not have similar infrastructure and equipment, and these are the places where CSOs have members and target communities. CSOs cannot reap the advantages of having email, internet, and telephones when the people they want to contact do not have the same degree of access.

Existing Approaches to Capacity Development

An unclear picture emerges from the assessment on existing approaches to capacity development in Tuvaluan CSOs. While CSOs clearly engage in various kinds of capacity development activities, they are neither coordinated nor systematic (Box 7.2). Some CSOs seek financial assistance from the government or from the larger community to initiate such activities, while others seek help from CSOs working in similar fields. Some focus on maintaining strong networks with their members whom they call upon in times of financial need. CSOs are also able to benefit through information-sharing from

Box 7.1. What We Need: Desired Capacities Of Tuvaluan CSOS

Tuvaluan CSOs identify the following as priority areas for developing capacity:

- Training opportunities, particularly technical training in areas of their expertise/work programmes.
- Enhancement of ICT skills. CSOs want training on the use of internet and software such as Microsoft Office and MYOB. Currently, staff members of less-developed CSOs have significantly less access to training opportunities or computer facilities.
- Management training, in terms of marketing, financial, and organizational development.

international organizations, and occasionally these relations bring training opportunities or result in joint-projects.

There are exceptional instances where staff training, specifically, has been conducted at a very high level in CSOs which can afford them. One CSO in the study where paid employees formed the bulk of its staff had strict training systems for staff members, which included educational training that could be undertaken in Tuvalu or abroad. Through these training opportunities, staff members acquired prerequisite qualifications for their positions. As a result, its staff members were very well qualified. One member had several publications under his name and was working on another publication at the time of the interviews. Another was working on a film documentary on climate change in Tuvalu with a Fijian-based filmmaker, and travelling to a United Nations meeting in Geneva to give a presentation on climate change issues. Yet another staff member was recently awarded an honorary PhD by an Asian based university.

On the whole, however, approaches to capacity building in the CSO sector need to be more clearly defined and developed. Tuvaluan CSOs indicate a very strong desire to acquire further training in areas that are pertinent to their current work programmes. During the consultations, a staff member from a CSO that works on environmental issues highlighted a university degree in the field of

environment as a desired capacity. Another project staff member who works at a CSO that focuses on ecological and environmental issues identified training of 'Geographic Information Systems' and eco-tourism as desired areas of training.

CSOs are also concerned with obtaining further training in the area of ICT. For a number of well-equipped CSOs, the acquisition of new ICT has propelled their level of technological advancement. In addition to computer hardware and software, this group is equipped with faxes and PowerPoint projectors. A project staff member at one CSO even possessed an underwater camera, sonar equipment, and the satellite-based navigation system known as the Global Positioning System (GPS). At the same time, there are Tuvaluan CSOs that function with bare minimum ICT equipment and software.

During the consultations, staff members notably wanted to undertake training in ICT and software usage such as Microsoft Office, the most popular software, and MYOB. A number of CSOs have MYOB but it is underutilised due to lack of knowledge. Apart from wanting to enhance their skills in these areas, staff members appeared to believe that developing their ICT skills would benefit in their engagement with aid donors. Donors could attempt to strike a balance by providing basic ICT equipment and software to the less developed CSOs which lack them, and target on providing training to those which do not possess the knowledge capacity to use

them. It is also worth considering providing more overseas training arrangements for CSOs that have progressed to using more sophisticated technology.

Another area of considerable interest to Tuvaluan CSOs is management training in marketing, financial, and organizational development. This is

not only an indication of commitment by staff to their professional growth, but also represents their personal desire to upskill. Since CSOs in Tuvalu keenly exhibited their enthusiasm for such learning opportunities during the consultations, this could be a key area where donors could target their assistance.

Box 7.2. CSO Capacity Building Activities: Highlights

- *Assessment on capacity building initiatives in Tuvaluan CSOs presents an unclear picture. Such activities occur in various ways, but are not coordinated or systematic.*
- *What is clear is that better developed organizations are able to provide greater access to training opportunities for staff. The systems and processes for training staff correlates with the level of organizational development.*
- *In some exceptional cases, staff training has occurred at a very high level, and has included educational training abroad for staff members.*

End Notes

- i UNDP 2010: 8.
- ii Feeny and Clark 2008.
- iii Cook Islands Statistics Office 2011.
- iv Central Intelligence Agency 2011a.
- v Ibid.
- vi UNDP 2007: 4.
- vii Central Intelligence Agency 2011a.
- viii Ibid.
- ix UN ESCAP 2011.
- x Central Intelligence Agency 2011b (2005 est).
- xi Ibid (2005 est).
- xii Government of the Federated States of Micronesia 2000.
- xiii Central Intelligence Agency 2011c (2002 Census).
- xiv Ibid.
- xv UNDP 2011a.
- xvi Central Intelligence Agency 2011c (1980 est).
- xvii UNDP 2011f.
- xviii Ibid.
- xix US Department of State 2011.
- xx Ibid.
- xxi New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade 2011.
- xxii Central Intelligence Agency 2011d (2011 est).
- xxiii Ibid (2007 census).
- xxiv Ibid (2007 census).
- xxv UNDP 2011b.
- xxvi Central Intelligence Agency 2011d (2003 est).
- xxvii Central Intelligence Agency 2011d (2011 est).
- xxviii UNDP 2011b.
- xxix Central Intelligence Agency 2011e (2010 est).
- xxx Ibid (2010 est).
- xxxi Central Intelligence Agency 2011f (2011 est).
- xxxii Central Intelligence Agency 2011f (1999 Census).
- xxxiii Ibid.
- xxxiv UNDP 2011c.
- xxxv Central Intelligence Agency 2011f (2011 est).
- xxxvi UNDP 2011c.
- xxxvii Central Intelligence Agency 2011g (2010 est).
- xxxviii Ibid (2010 est).
- xxxix Central Intelligence Agency 2011h (2011 est).
- xl Tonga Department of Statistics 2011a.
- xli Tonga Department of Statistics 2011b.
- xlii UNDP 2011d.
- xliii Ibid.
- xliv Ibid.
- xlv Ibid.
- xlvi Central Intelligence Agency 2011i (2010 est).
- xlvii Ibid (2010 est).
- xlviii Central Intelligence Agency 2011j (2010 est).
- xlix Central Intelligence Agency 2011j.
- i Ibid.
- ii UNDP 2011e.
- iii Ibid.
- iiii Central Intelligence Agency 2011k (2010 est).
- liv Ibid (2010 est).
- lv Tuvalu National Council of Women 2008.

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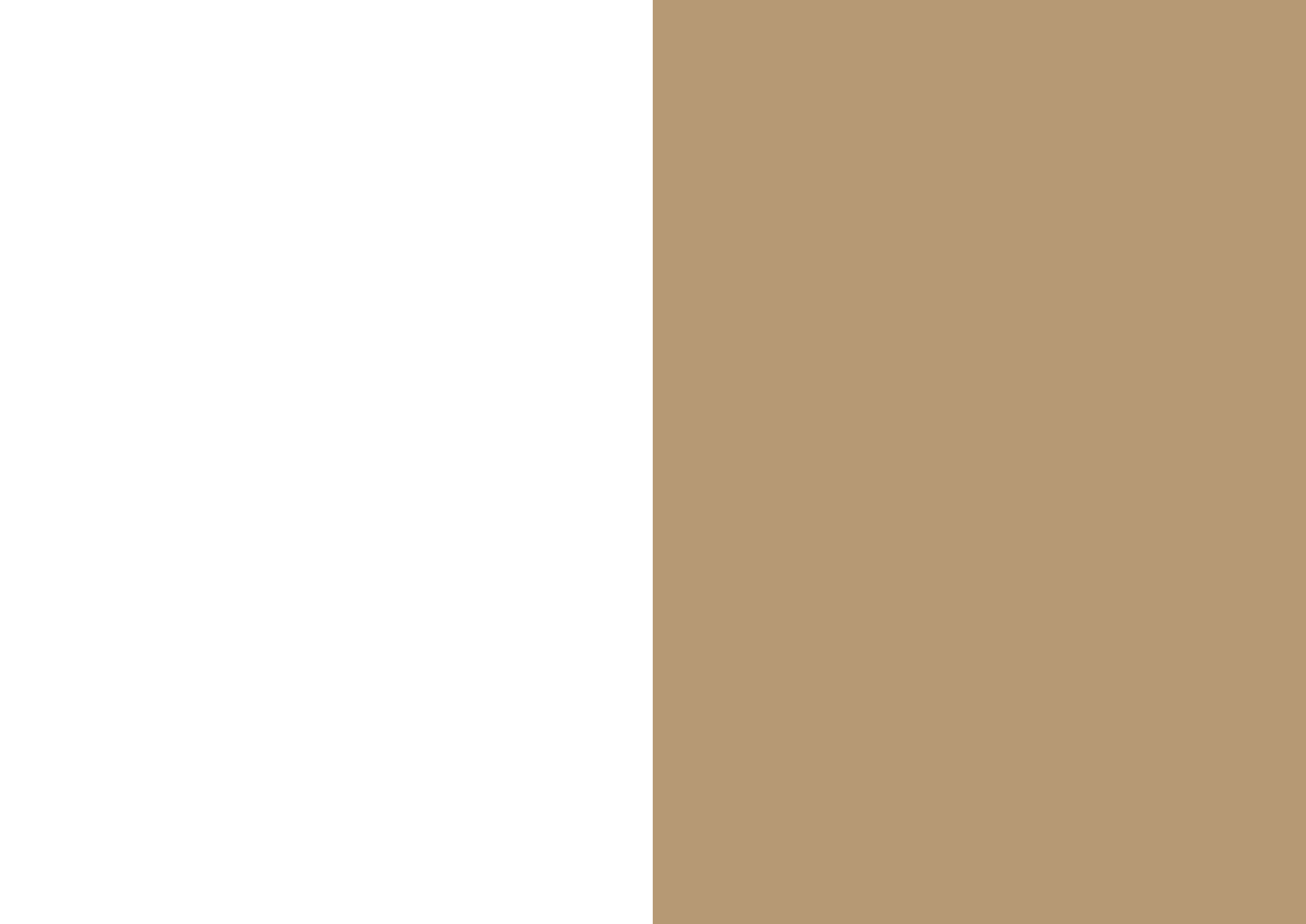
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