



**Jurisdictional report of the Parliamentary Civic Education Department
of
National Parliament of Solomon Islands
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Brief Background of the Parliamentary Civic Education Department (PCED)

The Preamble of the Solomon Islands constitution explains that the power to rule the country belongs to the citizens of Solomon Islands. It is through this legal statement that people of the country give powers to the three arms of the state. The three arms of the state refers to the National Legislature (Parliament), Executive (Government) and Judiciary (Court System in the country) (Constitution of the Solomon Islands, 2009, 13).

Since gaining political Independence from Great Britain on the 7th of July 1978, Solomon Islands adopted some features of Parliamentary democracy. Whenever Parliament meeting is organized there are three political groupings, the government, opposition and independent .The government sits on the Speakers right, the opposition on the speaker's left and independent group right across the speaker. According to the short political history of our Parliament, members are elected into Parliament by constituents representing 50 constituencies of Solomon Islands and since Independence three women were elected to Parliament. The first woman elected into Parliament is Mrs. Hilda Kari who was MP of East Central Guadalcanal from 1989 – 2001.The second is Hon. Vika Lusibaea ,MP of North Malaita Constituency elected into Parliament on a BI Election held in August 2013-2014.The third and current is Hon. Freda A.B Tuki Soriakomua , MP for Temotu Vatu 2014-2018.

Under phase two of the UNDP Parliamentary Strengthening Programme (2008 – 2012), the UNDP and Parliament established the Parliamentary Civic Education Department (PCED) in September, 2008 and recruited the first two graduates to set up the department with goal of taking “Parliament to the Public” and its main focus on *“Parliamentary education and community engagement services will facilitate citizen engagement with and develop their knowledge of the Parliament and representative democracy, reduce resistance to women’s candidacy and to assist citizens to exercise their rights and responsibilities in free and fair manner according to the Constitution (National Parliamentary Strengthening Project phase 2, 2008 – 2011, p30).* Since 1978, SI Parliament has never established department that educate citizens of the country on the functions of Parliament and role of its members. The PCED main outcomes are based on four components; they are community engagement services, curriculum support services, school outreach programmes and gender programmes.

Outcome 1: Community Engagement Services

Constituency Tours

PCED visited 2 constituencies this year on 27 Aug -2nd Sep 2017. They are Central Makira Constituency and East Makira Constituency. A total of 20 communities and 20 Schools were visited. A team of 5 officers from Parliament went down by flight and

then by boat to get to all the communities. Traveling is not always safe as the team encountered high seas and bad weather. People find these awareness very interesting and enlightening at the same time as the country is heading towards the elections in 2018.

Public Tours to Parliament

In 2017, the PCED continued to organise public tours for the general public. Most of our visitors to Parliament were tourists from USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. This includes official visits to Parliament by government officials from region and overseas. For the period of this report a total of one thousand and fifteen (1,015) people visited our Parliament.

Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) Workshop

PCED is responsible of organizing workshops for public servants. Since January 2017, PCED team jointly hosted workshops with the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) of the Ministry of Public Service. The workshop aimed to educate our public servants to understand and appreciate the parliamentary system that SI upholds and maintain. Also, public servants to learn about functions of Parliament and role of their MPs. The workshop gave opportunity for the public servants to visit the Parliament Chamber and see the supporting services provided in Parliament for MPs. The tours to Parliament also included watching a 15 minutes DVD on Parliament which we called "Parliament Blo Umi". To date a total of 75 public servants have visited Parliament House.

Radio Program

This year PCED supported Parliament media in organising radio programmes on Parliament. The radio programmes are aired fortnightly (15 Minutes) on our local broadcaster, the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) . Again Solomon Islands consists of almost 800 islands separated by vast ocean and rugged mountains hence the use of radio is one of the cheapest but at the same time affordable outreach programme Parliament used to educate Solomon Islanders on the work Parliament and roles of members of parliament.

Outcome 2: Curriculum Support Services

Resource Books for Schools

PCED and Media Unit of the National Parliament worked together in producing brochures, factsheets and pamphlets which PCED used in school outreach programmes to Parliament and for the constituency visits to the Provinces.

For teachers and school children of our primary and secondary schools, PCED supported the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development Educational Materials and its Curriculum Development Department in developing resource materials. Since last year Parliament worked on two resource books for teachers and students of primary and secondary Schools. For our high schools PCED will launch the resource book "How our Parliament make Laws" next year. Our students in year 9 (Form Three) study about parliament and politics in Solomon Islands hence this is one way parliament reach out in helping younger generation of Solomon Islands in increasing their knowledge of parliament and to learn to appreciate the parliament democracy Solomon Islands adopted from UK. On the same note this is one way parliament help students in their preparation for the external national examinations at the end of every year.

Outcome 3: School Outreach Programmes

High School Debate

National Parliament together with the British High Commission hosted a school debate to mark the Commonwealth Day Celebration on **March 13th 2017**. This year is the second time the National Parliament had commemorated the Commonwealth Day. Last year 2 schools participated in a poetry competition on the theme "Inclusive Commonwealth". For this year the theme is "A Peacebuilding Commonwealth", and the topic of debate is "*Equality in Politics Means Equal Number of Women in Parliament*". Eight students from 8 High Schools participated in the school debate. The schools include, Bishop Epalle School, St. Nicholas College, St. John School, King George Sixth School, Betikama College, Woodford International School and Burns Creek School.

School Tours

This year more schools have requested to come and visit our Parliament. There are two types of school tours, one is where students come to Parliament House and the other is where the PCED team goes out and visit the schools. Both types of tours are really effective and students and teachers both appreciate the work that the

department is doing. For this reporting period a total of two hundred and seventy (270) students visited Parliament

Outcome 4: Gender Programme

Young Women Parliamentary (YWPG)

Parliament as the highest decision making body of the land has seen and recognised the need to involve women in leadership as this will make way for other important gender issues to be addressed. In June 2011 Parliamentary Civic Education Unit, with the support of the Speaker, Prime Minister and Chairman of the Parliamentary House Committee formed the Young Women's Parliamentary Group (YWPG).

The **mission** of the Group is to create space for young women to experience and participate in leadership; and its **vision**; is to help empower emerging young women leaders to reach their full potential. Secondly, to network with current leaders to enhance and develop young women in leadership.

This year, the YWPG executive and members participated in a good number of national political, social and economic activities affecting Solomon Islands.

"Say It Out Loud" Film Festival

This is a recent incentive by the YWPG Executive team to use film as a way to get to the "youth" population. YWPG works closely with the Ministry of Women Youth Children and Family Affairs and align our programs with the Government's Policies. Solomon Islands is also one of the countries that signed the CEDAW Convention on fighting domestic violence against women and girls. Since 2016 Parliament has been hosting this film festival, it is a competition in which the best films get awarded and screened during the festival. The theme is on Ending Domestic Violence. A good number of youths entered the competition. This year's Film Festival is special as the best Award is named after the former chairlady of YWPG who passed on early this year. She was the one who came up with the Film Festival Idea in 2015.

Parliamentary Outrigger Workshop

For the first time in history of our Parliament a gender training has been conducted for our staff. This is a joint initiative by the National Parliament of Solomon Islands

and the Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnership Program (PWPP). The original idea was to train MPs however the Clerk thinks it's important that Parliament Staff be trained as well before the MPs. A total of 60 staff were trained, on the main objectives of the training is for staff to understand and define gender, to identify stereotypes that excluded certain groups within society including women and to look for ways in which gender can be mainstreamed in the work of Parliament. PCED is looking forward to training our 50 MPs in 2018.

Solomon Islands National Womens Forum

Jointly organised by YWPG and five other women organisations in the country. The main objectives of this forum is to get a collective voice of women into the country's development and providing an avenue where women can voice out their concerns. The main topics were on Women Economic Empowerment, Women and Leadership, Violence Against Women. A total of 60 women from all over the Solomon Islands attended.

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