

CASE STUDY 3:

COMMUNITY-LED ADAPTATION PATHWAYS IN SOLOMON ISLANDS PROJECT

Community-led Adaptation Pathways in Solomon Islands Project is an example of a community-led adaptation project, which recognised diverse community perspectives and strengths. This case study links to the 'Programmatic' level of ACFID's Climate Action Framework.



DONOR/FUNDING PARTNER:

The Australian Aid Program under Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP)

LOCATION:

Solomon Islands

TIMEFRAME:

2018 - 2020

PARTNER NGOS:

Plan International Australia	Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT)
World Wide Fund for Nature (Australia)	Australian National University (ANU)
World Wide Fund for Nature (Solomon Islands)	CSIRO

OBJECTIVE:

The program intends to support multi-stakeholder livelihood co-production planning and adaptation in Solomon Island communities through developing guidelines for community facilitators and local adaptation practitioners.

LINKS TO ACFID CLIMATE ACTION FRAMEWORK:

PROGRAMMATIC

Building climate resilience

Nature-based solutions

DEMONSTRATION OF ENABLERS:

- 1: Multi-year, core funding and flexible funding options
- 2: Partnerships, relationships, and knowledge exchange
- 3: Ongoing and holistic approach
- 4: Prioritising climate change action within organisations
- 5: Strength-based approaches, recognising traditional and local knowledge
- 6: Recognising the 'what' and 'how' of climate change integration

CLIMATE CHANGE INTEGRATION APPROACH:

The project was funded by Australian Aid through ANCP with flexible and open-ended outcome requirements (Enabler 1). The flexible funding supported the project partners to design the project from the community's perspective – taking a holistic approach (Enabler 3), instead of labelling the project as a climate change program. This supported designing the project focused on local governance (Enabler 5) and social development, with climate change considered as one of the key external risks against which communities were designing their adaptation pathways.

Photo: Forests provide a range of products that support livelihoods in many rural communities in Solomon Islands. Photo: Rob Maccoll for AusAID/DFAT.



There was a really big focus on a discovery process and providing a really diverse range of people from across the community with a framework to help them identify their desired pathways [for the future].”

Nat Burke, WWF.

Consideration of climate change as one of a number of risks a community is facing demonstrates the holistic approach the project took, bringing in a systems thinking lens (Enabler 3). Project partners used a variety of tools and methods to support diverse community members to think about ‘system linkages’ – connections between natural and human systems, and also linkages across scales, from community to sub-national, national and beyond.

The ANGOs worked with local partners (SIDT and WWF Solomon Islands) (Enabler 2) to explore locally relevant and appropriate adaptation pathways with communities. The project developed around a recognition that the communities already had a good sense of climate change risks and consequences.

Therefore, instead of a knowledge transfer approach, the project adopted a strength-based approach (Enabler 5) and prioritised discovering the knowledge within the communities to understand their desired pathways for adaptation. WWF described the intentional use of a strengths-based approach in the quote below.



If you just went in there thinking purely what are the vulnerabilities, what are the threats, where are we going to build a seawall? You miss out on the strengths, and that not only has a really detrimental effect on how communities see themselves, I think it misses out on a huge amount of really valuable local knowledge.”

Nat Burke, WWF.

The ANGOs recognised their roles in the project as facilitators with a high-level strategic role to support community leadership (Enabler 5). WWF noted how they aimed to foster links between different stakeholders, including across multiple governance structures (e.g., local traditional governance, sub-national and national government). In the end, a reflection from WWF was that connections, relationships and bringing people together was most important (Enabler 6).



I expected the data for decision-making to be more important than it was ... It was actually more about the process of bringing people together and understand that connectivity.”

Nat Burke, WWF.

The ANGO, WWF Solomon Islands and SIDT partners worked closely with academics from Australian National University (ANU) and researchers from CSIRO, to develop an overarching framework of activities, which supported the community-led process.

LESSONS FOR NGOS FROM SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES OF CASE STUDY 3:

- This Case Study demonstrates the complementary nature of the enablers, for example flexible funding (Enabler 1) allowed for communities to define their own adaptation pathways; and taking a strength-based approach enables the valuing and prioritisation of local knowledge (Enabler 5), which in turn supports local leadership for transformative climate actions (Enabler 2)
- Recognise climate change as one of a number of risks facing communities to enable a more holistic and bigger picture consideration of community priorities and opportunities (Enabler 3 and 5)
- A strength-based approach that values local knowledge and recognises that some adaptation tools are already available within communities can help project partners reveal communities’ desired pathways for adaptation and identify new and effective ways to support communities (Enabler 5)
- Relationships and partnerships are a critical component of transformational change, and adequate time and effort needs to support building connections between project partners (Enabler 6)