



PACIFIC COMMONWEALTH EQUALITY PROJECT

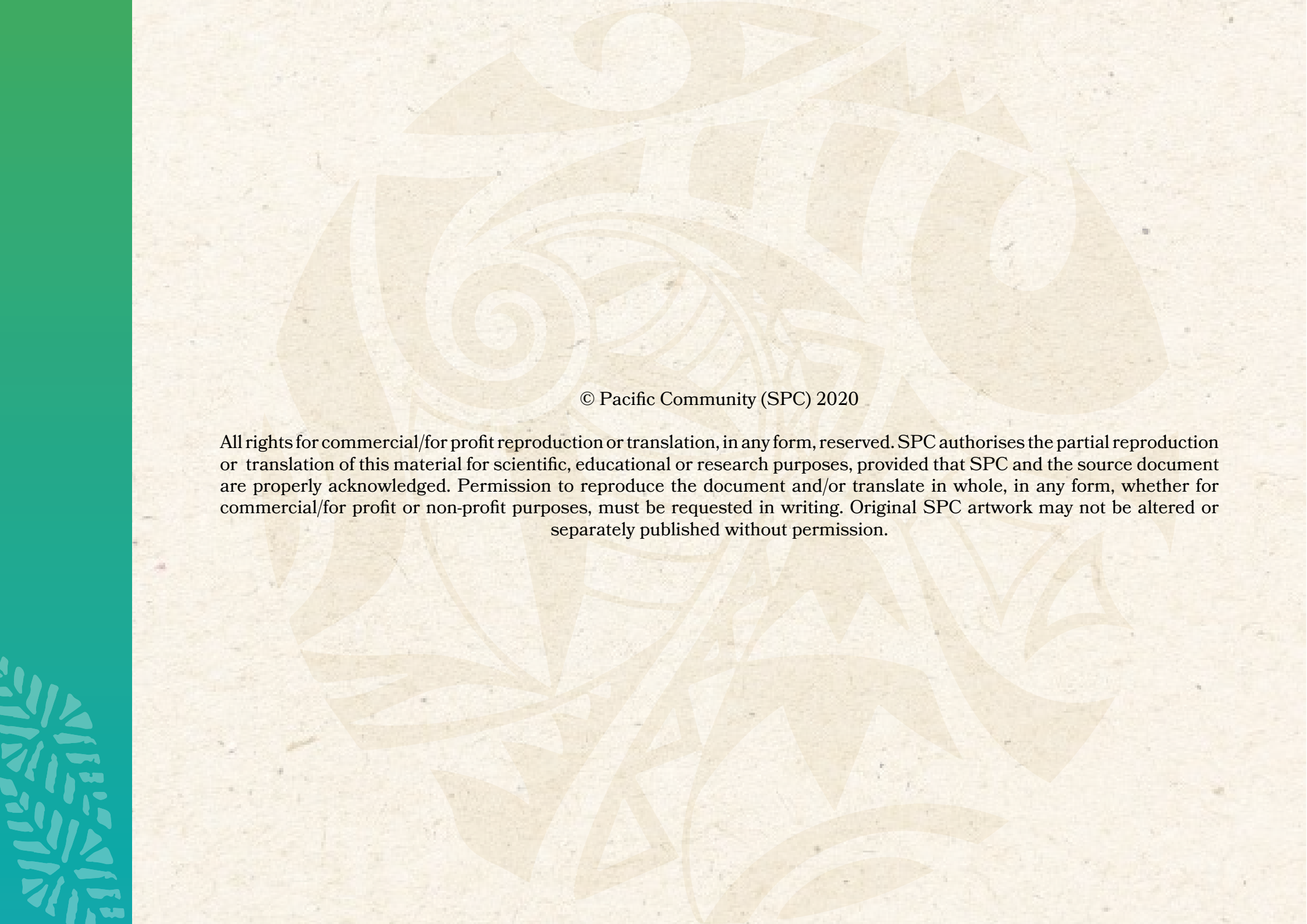
A UK funded project
implemented by the Pacific Community
Regional Rights Resource Team
(SPC RRRT)

PACIFIC COMMONWEALTH EQUALITY PROJECT

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Regional Rights Resource Team



Suva, Fiji
2020



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The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018 was an important step forward for human rights in the Pacific – the resulting communique contained pledges towards the realisation of rights across Commonwealth countries, including in the Pacific. The pledges covered support for the full realisation of the rights of women and girls and the establishment of National Human Rights Institutions, as well as a commitment to the Universal Periodic Review process.

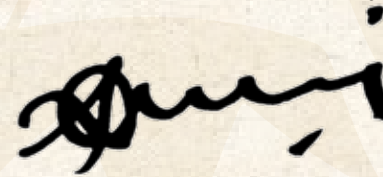
When the Regional Rights Resource Team was established in 1995, its mission was to address gender inequality in the Pacific. This objective remains at the heart of RRRT's work but we have also expanded our mandate, at the request of the Pacific Island countries we serve, to include supporting the establishment and development of NHRIs and helping governments meet their human rights commitments, including through the Universal Periodic Review.

When the United Kingdom, as Chair in Office of the Commonwealth, decided to invest in the Pacific to realise the CHOGM commitments, the obvious link to our work meant we were delighted to be the implementing partner for the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project. With over 35 staff located in eight countries across the Pacific, RRRT is a home grown entity at the forefront of efforts to help realise human rights in across our region. From the outset, the relationship with the UK was extremely constructive. That they trusted us to use our Pacific Islands expertise, knowledge and agency to design and implement a programme of work that explored new ways of strengthening human rights in the region and, at the same time, responded directly to the most pressing needs, is warmly appreciated. The result has been significant progress towards achieving the communique objectives,

including through the project's grand finale – the 84th Extraordinary Outreach Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Samoa in March 2020, the first time any United Nations human rights treaty body has conducted a formal session outside of Geneva and New York. This brochure explains how such progress was made and I hope its readership will find it useful, especially in informing future human rights work in the region.

The waka that is the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project is now berthed. However, the human rights journey across our Blue Continent is far from over and RRRT will look to building on the progress made under the project. The project has confirmed that partnerships – including between RRRT and the UK government as well as with our other donors, the governments of Australia and Sweden and the European Union – are essential for future human rights work. We, at RRRT, look forward to strengthening these partnerships as we continue towards the realisation of rights that are relevant and contextualised to the Pacific.

Finally, let me close with vinaka vakalevu to the government of the United Kingdom for its investment in the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project and to the British High Commission in Fiji for its support and guidance during the implementation of the project.



Miles Young

Director

Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to oversee the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project (PCEP) and it has been exciting to produce this review and look back on everything that has been achieved. When we commenced in July 2018 we wanted to focus on four approaches to achieve the overall project goals - institutional building, the Pacific contextualisation of rights, innovation and partnerships.

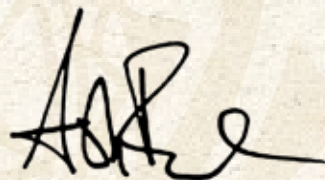
Through these four strategies I believe we have accomplished what we set out to do and have taken the opportunity afforded by the UK to fundamentally shift the foundations for the realisation of rights in the Pacific. There have been regional declarations and guiding principles agreed, there have been Human Rights Council resolutions and statements, regional and national workshops, the production of numerous video and written resources, study tours, the development of new technologies, the first ever regional outreach session of any of the UN treaty bodies.... and more.

The common element in all of these exciting activities and developments is that they have been driven by the Pacific, for the Pacific. All activities were designed in a way to enable participants to explore issues and define their own solutions and this is in keeping with the ethos of SPC RRRT. That has made our job much easier but it is now also our responsibility to support ongoing efforts arising out of this project and we have already started this in collaboration with a number of our partners.

The achievements of PCEP would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the British High Commissioner to Fiji, Her Excellency Melanie Hopkins, who not only endorsed all project activities but championed the outcomes and worked tirelessly at the bilateral level to realise commitments made. Special mention must also be

made to Lauren Bird who, in her role as Commonwealth Project Officer for the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office, guided the project expertly and substantially contributed to many of its outcomes. Finally, thanks goes to Kalpana Nizarat and Delvin Prasad – PCEP Communications and Finance/Administration Officers respectively – who went above and beyond to deliver exceptional results and to the rest of the RRRT team who were all involved in the project design and implementation throughout.

Happy reading.



Ashley Bowe

PCEP Programme Manager



“

As Chair in Office of the Commonwealth, the UK was delighted to pledge £1.8m for the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project, which supported the implementation of human rights commitments made by leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. PCEP provided valuable technical assistance to strengthen human rights institutions and mechanisms across Pacific Commonwealth countries, with a focus on equality and adherence to international human rights obligations

..... Melanie Hopkins, British High Commissioner to Fiji, non-resident High Commissioner to the Kingdom of Tonga, the Republic of Kiribati, Tuvalu and non-resident Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia

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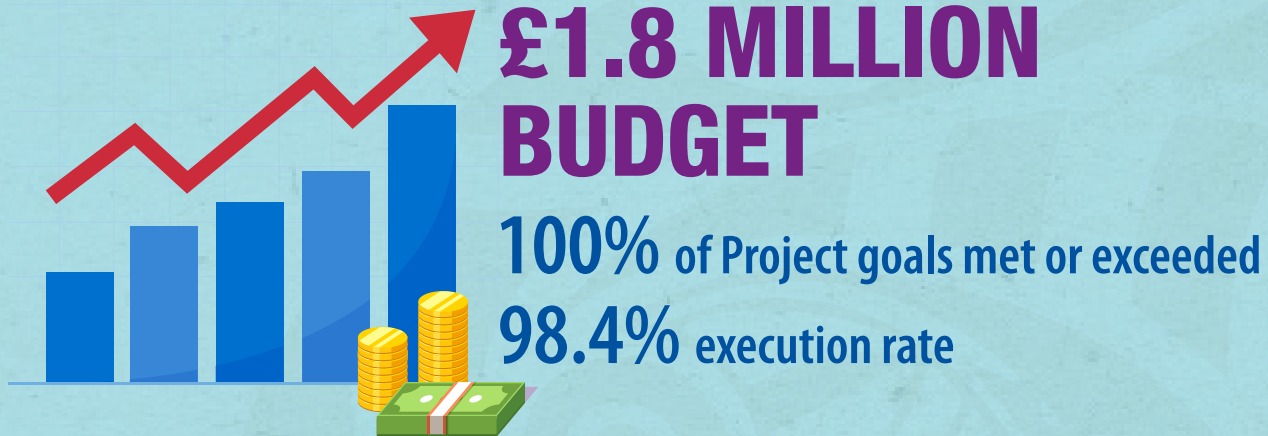


At the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April 2018 a communique was agreed by the leaders present which contained a wide range of goals towards the greater realisation of human rights across the Commonwealth. To support these commitments the UK pledged £1.8m to fund the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project, and chose the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team as its implementing partner. Due to run from July 2018 until March 2020 the project design established out a clear theory of change to achieve sustainable results in relation to the communique commitments.



Whilst the theory of change was well-established at the outset, the activities under each output evolved over the duration of the project to respond to country requests and capitalise on emerging issues. This flexibility was critical in ensuring the project directly addressed the priority areas for Commonwealth Pacific Island Countries and that the outcomes would enjoy the greatest chance of long term success and national ownership.

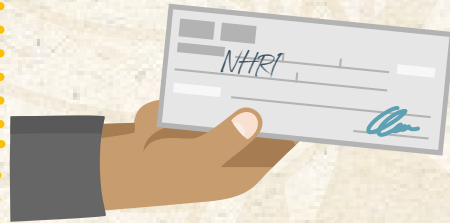




- Port Vila MPs Declaration
- Nadi Young Leaders Declaration
- The Pacific Principles (for NMIRFs)



3 NHRI



small grants programmes

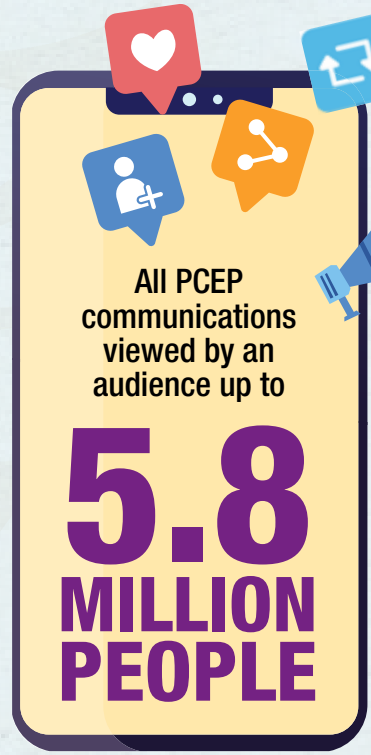
50 PROJECT ACTIVITIES



1ST EVER
 regional outreach session of a UN Treaty Body



3 Human Rights Council statements and one side event



2 PIECES

of human rights software developed

SADATA – open source tool to plan and track of national development plans, the SDGs and human rights recommendations

NHRI Information Management System – open source tool to manage complaints and handle/analyse institutional data

15

Workshops and MPs dialogues



2 RATIFICATIONS



of the Convention Against Torture

- Kiribati
- Samoa

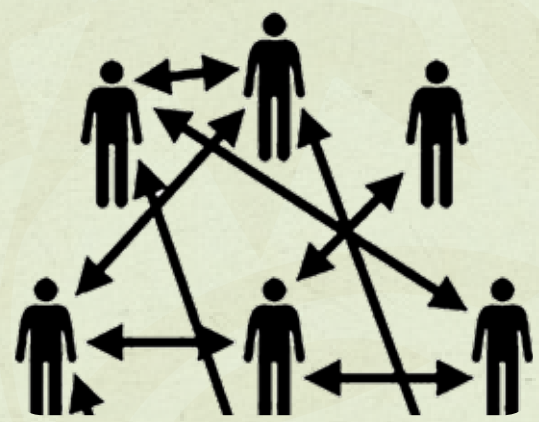
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Educational Resources



2 NHRI STUDY TOUR AND EXCHANGES

- New Zealand
- Northern Ireland & England



2 NHRI SCOPING MISSIONS



3 Primetime TV talkback shows



34,000

retweets, shares and comments

OUTPUT 1

**Establishment and Strengthening of
National Human Rights Institutions
(NHRIs)**

National human rights institutions (NHRIs) act as a watchdog to ensure the government and other state actors meet their responsibilities to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of the people. In this way they bridge the gap between international human rights obligations and enjoyment of those rights on the ground. To lay the foundations for effective implementation of human rights commitments they also have a mandate to ‘promote’ human rights – essentially creating a national understanding and conscience of rights of responsibilities. In a region where human rights are often perceived as foreign, the role of NHRIs in translating rights into language and terms that can be understood and owned is critical.



“ NHRIs are the critical link between international law and national action, with a broad mandate to protect and promote human rights through a range of activities. They can draw on national cultural values to make international human rights law relevant. Experience among Pacific NHRIs has shown how international standards can actually strengthen respect for cultural values and faith, and vice-versa ”

Ashley Bowe, PCEP Programme Manager
Regional Rights Resource Team,
Pacific Community.

There are now three legally mandated NHRIs in the Pacific at various stages of establishment. The Tuvalu Ombudsman’s Office is relatively new whilst the Samoa and (re-established) Fiji NHRIs have been in existence since 2013 and 2015 respectively. To date Samoa is the only ‘A’ accredited institution among the Pacific Commonwealth Island Countries.

The growing understanding of the potential value of these institutions and international advocacy including through the Universal Periodic Review has led to interest among a number of other Pacific Island Countries to establish similar offices.

Output 1 of PCEP sought to focus on these important institutions and capitalise on the growing movement to establish and strengthen NHRIs through a range of activities – some traditionally part of SPC RRRT’s work and some entirely new.

NHRI Small Grants Programme

PCEP made small grants to the NHRIs in Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu based on proposals received by the respective offices to address institutional needs or particular projects.

Information Management System - Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission (FHRADC)

The power and strength of any NHRI derives from its credibility, which in turn rests largely on its ability to store, manage, analyse and produce information with integrity, transparency and accountability.

Possessing an effective information management system is therefore essential for an NHRI. However, globally numerous such offices struggle with software that is not fit for purpose and often hinders, rather than helps, in the promotion and protection of human rights. Recognising that NHRIs are unique at the national level, but share similarities among one another, the FHRADC showed commendable insight in aiming to design and build an open source system that would not only meet their needs but potentially the needs of NHRIs across the world.

Contracting one of the leading human rights software organisations, HURIDOCs, a scoping exercise was undertaken which identified the need for the system to manage complaints handling and track information relating to all other functions including detention monitoring, training, awareness raising,

legislative review and more. The system is currently in the process of being built and will soon be ready for use and freely available to other NHRIs.



Implementation of National Inquiry into Family Violence Recommendations - Office of the Ombudsman, Samoa

The National Inquiry carried out by the Samoa NHRI / Office of the Ombudsman in 2019 broke new ground. It was the first NHRI inquiry ever to be undertaken in the Pacific and contained a comprehensive range of recommendations that sought to address the root causes of family violence, as identified through the public consultations, hearing and research.

Generating international coverage for its finding of the existence of a ‘national epidemic of violence’ the inquiry recommendations were largely accepted by the Government. PCEP funding through the grants programme allowed for the implementation a number of the key recommendations and public awareness raising of the inquiry findings.

Behavioural change of the kind demanded by the inquiry recommendations usually takes generations but the public nature of the inquiry, and solutions rooted in culture and faith have seen an unprecedented impact on one of the region’s biggest human rights issues. Village councils have begun to establish by-laws to address family violence and thanks to the PCEP grant a national family safety awareness campaign is underway and a family safety committee pilot programme is being rolled out across Samoa.



It is with sadness but also great hope that I... present... this Report on the National Public Inquiry into Family Violence in Samoa. Sadness because of what we have heard over the course of this Inquiry about the appalling violence suffered across our country within families, and the sheer scale of the problem we are facing. But also hope and optimism, arising from the practical solutions which have been put forward and a realisation of how our culture (Fa’asamoa), Faith, and human rights can help us in addressing the social ill that is family violence.

• Maiava Iulai Toma, Ombudsman of Samoa



Public Outreach & Awareness Raising of Tuvalu’s NHRI – Office of the Ombudsman, Tuvalu

In addition to its traditional good governance role the Tuvalu Office of the Ombudsman was given a human rights mandate through the National Human Rights Institution of Tuvalu Act 2017. This dual mandate model is increasingly popular in the Pacific as countries seek to make best use of resources. Experience has also shown that the synergy between good governance and human rights can be well utilised when the national body responsible for the promotion and protection of both is under one roof.

A key characteristic of an effective NHRI is its accessibility to all within society, particularly groups who have historically been subjected to systemic discrimination. A fundamental aspect of accessibility is the general public simply being aware of the existence of an office responsible for protecting and promoting their rights.

The Tuvalu NHRI small grant was therefore awarded to the office to undertake a series of national consultations and awareness raising activities to build understanding of its new mandate and to collect information on human rights issues that would help prioritise areas of work. The office met with key stakeholders from government and civil society and facilitated community level conversations where people and groups could raise concerns and learn about the new NHRI. A range of IEC materials were also produced to assist the office in their ongoing visibility and awareness efforts.



Samoa NHRI Participation in the 9th International Conference on Human Rights Education

26 – 29 November 2018, Sydney, Australia

The Paris Principles require NHRIs to engage at the international and regional level, to develop their own expertise and share examples from their own experiences.

Through PCEP the Samoa NHRI was able to attend the 9th International Conference on Human Rights Education and to present on their contextualised approach to human rights protection and promotion. Their approach is starting to show impressive results in fostering national understanding and ownership of human rights, where previously widespread reluctance and scepticism had been a barrier to implementation.



“

The key outcomes of our participation were: (1) Established and strengthened partnerships with various agencies; (2) Learned and identified future funding and collaboration opportunities; Exposure of NHRI Samoa's work; (4) Shared practices in protecting and promoting human rights with sister organisations.

Samoa NHRI

”

Regional Workshop on Human Rights Education and Communication

8 – 10 April 2019, Nadi, Fiji

NHRIs are mandated to protect and promote human rights, but often the focus can be on the former and more reactive of these two roles. The promotion of human rights is more proactive in nature and arguably even more important as a society aware of their rights and responsibilities is more likely to abide by and demand these standards.

Educating and communicating human rights and the work of NHRIs is therefore an essential component for these bodies the world over. This regional workshop brought together 29 participants from existing Pacific NHRIs and government representatives from countries in the process of establishing such bodies. The aim of the two-day event was to explore what effective education and communication looks like within the Pacific context including how culture and faith can be used to explain human rights standards, and to start drafting national resources to be used by government and NHRIs.



“

We communicate because we want to get things done. We communicate because we have a purpose. We communicate because we want to achieve meaningful results

Participant

”

NHRI Strategic Planning Retreat

29 April – 1 May 2019, Samoa

In 2018 the Samoa NHRI underwent a review of its implementation of a 2014 Capacity Assessment and this found a number of areas for improvement. A request for technical and financial assistance was made to PCEP to facilitate an office retreat with the aim of reviewing and revising the current organisational structure and developing a new strategic plan



The retreat has proven to be a most beneficial exercise not only for our staff, office outstanding matters but especially for the Office as a whole as it provided a platform (away from all daily matters) to address and pave the way forward for the Office

Director of Corporate Services,
Office of the Ombudsman

41st Human Rights Council: Side Event and Statement

24 – 26 June 2019, Geneva, Switzerland

Geneva, and particularly the Palais des Nations where the Human Rights Council sits, is the global centre of the international human rights system. It is where priorities are set, regional and global issues put on the table and responses formulated. Relationships with the respective UN bodies, permanent missions and civil society organisations there is critical to influencing the agenda, but the lack of proximity of sheer distance from the Pacific makes this difficult. To further enhance outcomes from the trip across to the UK, the two Ombudsmen and Fiji NHRI Director travelled on to Geneva with the aim of building networks and relationships and raising awareness and understanding of the Pacific.

The trip was memorable for two reasons. First, the Ombudsman of Samoa delivered the first ever statements made by a NHRI to the Human Rights Council – one on behalf of his office and the other on behalf of a group of NHRIs from the Asia Pacific region. Secondly, a side event was facilitated to discuss how a contextualised approach to human rights is paying dividends in the Pacific. In addition to the NHRI representatives, the panel comprised a Pacific CSO and a branch chief from OHCHR. Attended by over 50 people, the feedback from the side event was overwhelmingly positive. The general feeling was that an important new approach had been introduced to Geneva that needed further consideration and attention.



NHRI Study Tour and Exchange Programme – United Kingdom and New Zealand

One of the flagship activities of outcome 1 – the study tour and exchange series sought to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices between Pacific NHRI staff and those government representatives seeking to establish NHRIs, and NHRI counterparts in the UK and NZ, and develop lasting networks for collaboration and information sharing. The overall goal was to provide answers to the question ‘what makes for an effective NHRI?’, both for participants from the Pacific and their European and New Zealand peers.

14 June 2019, Auckland, New Zealand

To increase the impact of the planned study tours to the UK and NZ a decision was taken to include government representatives from countries that had recently taken concrete steps towards establishing an NHRI, as well as staff from the established offices in Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu. In order to ensure that these participants had a good level of understanding of the functions of NHRIs and to enable their active participation in the study tours, an introductory half day session was organised and was attended by participants en route to Belfast for the start of the first study tour. Of those who attended 100% found it ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’.



17 – 21 June 2019, Belfast and London, UK

The first study tour in the series had 12 participants and took place over a week at the NHRIs of Northern Ireland (Belfast) and England & Wales (London). NHRI staff from both sides of the world shared their experiences and work around a range of topics, starting off with NHRI good governance and moving on to topics such as addressing sensitive human rights issues, investigations, legislative review, amicus curiae, and human rights education and outreach.



“

(It was) great to see really high performing NHRIs across all key mandates in action, and a great conduit for learning

”

Participant

2 – 6 December 2019, Auckland and Wellington, New Zealand

The second study tour and exchange took 11 participants to the New Zealand High Commission offices in Auckland and Wellington for a week of learning and dialogue. Human rights education, mediation and external stakeholder engagement were areas of focus and participants had the opportunity to meet with a number of the Commission's external partners.

The study tours are substantial investments, but from the UK and NZ experiences it was often remarked that the learning experienced by participants could not be achieved through other means. Due to the diversity of the group a range of impacts were observed, from strengthening NHRI capacity in substantive areas, to building networks and relationships between Pacific colleagues and their NZ/UK peers, and providing government representatives with the knowledge and confidence to push the establishment agenda after the tours.



“ I like to call myself now a human rights officer and as of now I have a lot of new ideas about how to improve our NHRI work back home.” NHRI staff study tour and exchange participant

..... Government representative study tour

“ (the NZ study tour experience) paves the way forward towards establishment of our NHRI ”

..... Exchange participant



Vanuatu NHRI Scoping Mission

15 – 19 July 2019, Port Vila, Vanuatu

NHRI scoping missions are undertaken at the request of governments considering establishment. The methodology has been tried and tested all over the world engages key stakeholders determine if there is a need for an NHRI and if so, what form should it take? The most common models are either stand-alone human rights commissions or dual-mandate Ombuds offices.

The scoping team consisted of representatives from RRRT, the Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs and the Melanesian Spearhead Group. In Port Vila they met with 50 people from key ministries, the Council of Chiefs, Law Reform Commission, Ombudsman's Office, faith groups, CSOs and NGOs. These meetings were an opportunity to explore the mandate of Paris Principle compliant NHRIs and whether these functions could be of value in Vanuatu.

The widely held view was that such an institution could be of value and the scoping team submitted a report to Government summarising this feedback and recommendations for possible solutions and next steps based on the national context.



“ I congratulate the Government of Vanuatu for this bold step it has taken in requesting a feasibility study to establish a human rights institution. NHRIs play an important role in advancing the rule of law and ensure the application of international human rights standards at the domestic level

..... Miles Young, Director SPC RRRT

Kiribati NHRI

5 – 12 September 2019, Tarawa & Gilbert Islands, Kiribati

The value of PCEP was never more evident than with the Kiribati NHRI scoping mission, where the funding and ambition of the project allowed a scope of consultations never undertaken before in the Pacific. In total 270 people were consulted in Tarawa and Kiritimati, covering also representatives from the Gilbert and outer Line Islands who were brought in to participate in the consultations. These comprised representatives of the state, civil society and communities



Scoping Mission

23 – 30 October 2019, Kiritimati & outer Line Islands, Kiribati

The importance of wide consultations is two-fold. First, it ensures the most informed findings recommendations and next steps - giving any NHRI established the strongest foundations possible. Secondly, it ensures that communities and stakeholders are educated on the functions of an NHRI and aware of its imminent establishment. Accessibility is a core characteristic of an effective NHRI and general awareness of the existence of an NHRI and its role is a pre-requisite for that, as the aims of the Tuvalu small grant programme (above) demonstrate.



“ During the NHRI scoping study, representatives from outer islands and south Tarawa were having (sic) the opportunity to visualize what the NHRI looks like and how can they benefit from its services. Hence, they realized that NHRI has significant roles to deal with all human rights matters and to protect human being from any kind of violation ”

Participant in the consultations

Samoa NHRI Video Statement to the 42nd Human Rights Council

13 September 2019

The Ombudsman’s statement to HRC41 was historic, being the first Pacific NHRI voice at the council. However, it is neither sustainable nor realistic to expect regular travel to Geneva to participate in the global discussions. Regardless, Pacific NHRIs should engage on a regular basis and this is possible via video message statements.

PCEP technical assistance was provided to the Samoa Ombudsman Office to prepare and deliver a video statement to HRC42 on the findings of their national inquiry into family violence. Not only is this modality cost and carbon efficient, but it also delivers greater impact at the Council too. Video messages are played on the two big screens and demand the attention of the states and stakeholders present, in comparison to statements delivered within the room.



OUTPUT 2

**Building State Capacity
for Implementation of Rights**

The state is the principal duty bearer of rights towards any nation of people. Output 2 of PCEP aimed to build the capacity of the state and state actors to implement and realise the rights of its people through national and regional level activities.

The project sought to make interventions that would create sustainable structural change that would, in turn, better enable the implementation of human rights. This strategy was three-pronged and aimed at governments, parliamentarians and the judiciary.



“ States have begun to build a new global implementation agenda. The keystone of this agenda is the evolution of a strong and sustainable State mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow up. Such a mechanism helps to build national resilience, it narrows the implementation gap, it contributes to the prevention of human rights violations and it eases the reporting burden for States ”

Nazhat-Shameem-Khan,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Fiji
to the United Nations in Geneva and current vice-
president to the Human Rights Council speaking at
the PCEP NMIRF Dialogue, Nadi April 2019

Firstly, activities were designed to capitalise on regional momentum behind particular issues, such as the prevention of torture or addressing the causes and impact of climate change.

Secondly, a range of activities were designed and implemented to maximise the impact of the international human rights system, notably the treaty body review processes and the Universal Periodic Review. This included facilitating mock reviews to prepare state delegations, report-writing workshops and, notably, exploring how the treaty body system could be brought closer to the rights holders.

Thirdly, and drawing on RRRT’s knowledge of the barriers to change that exist in the region, a focus was applied to addressing the overall approach states take towards reporting and implementation.

Vanuatu Human Rights Committee Capacity Building

13 – 17 August 2018, Port Vila Vanuatu

At the request of the ni-Van government technical assistance was provided to the National Human Rights Committee (NMIRF) to plan for upcoming human rights reports and the Universal Periodic Review. Consultations were also held to discuss the CEDAW and CRC concluding observations and the development of a national implementation plan. These consultations involved the participation of 33 representatives of government, civil society organisations, students, the private sector, faith based organisations and development partners.



Samoa National Implementation Plan

13 – 21 December 2018, Apia Samoa

The Samoa National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up (NMIRF) is one of the more advanced such bodies in the region and committed to creating and maintaining an implementation plan that would eventually cover all human rights recommendations and obligations, the SDGs and its national development plan. During this mission technical assistance was provided to the NMIRF in the drafting of the plan and in conducting a gap analysis.



Mock Universal Periodic Review

17 – 18 January 2019, Port Vila Vanuatu

The Universal Periodic Review offers states the opportunity to reflect on the domestic implementation status of human rights. It requires them to report to the Human Rights Council in order to receive recommendations and support from fellow countries around areas of improvement.

In order to prepare the state delegation to Geneva for the review a mock session was facilitated for 15 ni-Van government representatives, including the Minister of Justice and Ministry Director General. The session was a dress rehearsal of proceedings at the Council and aimed to help the delegations understand what would be asked of them, both in terms of information and process.

100% of participants felt highly/very highly able to incorporate the key teachings from the session into their subsequent work.

“ (the workshop was) important and new to me. It was good learning and practice for Geneva ”
Participant



Kiribati MPs Dialogue

14 - 15 November 2018, Tarawa Kiribati

The MPs of Kiribati made a substantial commitment to the protection of rights by requesting a human rights dialogue prior to each sitting to build their capacity to ensure legislative compliance and to drive the national development agenda. This initial dialogue was attended by 23 parliamentarians and aimed to introduce them to human rights and their duties in respect of their international obligations and commitments.

28 – 29 March 2019, Tarawa Kiribati

The second dialogue in this series brought in expert speakers to discuss gender equality and violence against women and girls, from a faith based perspective and the value of social citizenship education. 24 Parliamentarians attended and after two such events it was found that “the opportunity to build the human rights capacity of MPs using this forum is unquestioned.”

“There is so much more that holds faith traditions and human rights traditions together than that which separates them”

MPs dialogue discussion paper



27 August 2019, Tarawa Kiribati

The third dialogue in the series was an opportunity to build on the knowledge gained in the first two events and look at some of the basics of human rights in more depth. The ongoing value of the nature of these dialogues was evidenced through the evaluation survey where over half of the respondents reported to have learned a lot and with everyone reporting some level of learning. 100% of respondents were of the view that it is very important (63%) or important (37%) that government works towards the effective implementation of human rights.



Regional Seminar on the Ratification and Implementation of the Convention Against Torture (CAT)

6 – 8 February 2019, Natadola Fiji

Whilst the Pacific boasts a range of strong constitutions and legislative frameworks that enshrine some of the legal requirements of CAT, ratification levels are among the lowest in the world. The regional seminar brought together government representatives from 12 Pacific Island Countries (PICS) with the aim of breaking down barriers to ratification and implementation and was facilitated by SPC RRRT, the Convention Against Torture Initiative and Universal Rights Group.

In total, 63 representatives of government from around the world, development partners, international experts and national human rights institutions attended the three-day seminar to promote dialogue and cooperation among PICs and hear good practices and success stories in the prevention of torture and ill-treatment.

The seminar continues to have a lasting impact. In the immediate aftermath Samoa and Kiribati ratified CAT and SPC RRRT received multiple requests for technical assistance from countries wishing to accede to the treaty or improve implementation. The momentum carried on into 2020 as relationships developed at the seminar led to the Fiji Police Service travelling to Samoa to provide training on the first hour procedure for their colleagues.



“

What could be more contrary to the common cultural values that bind us together across the Pacific than torture and cruel and inhuman and degrading treatment? Dignity, collective security, honour, love are just some of the collective thread of the social fabric we share across our region. All of these values are undermined by any actions covered by the definitions contained within CAT

”

Audrey Aumua,
Deputy Director General,
Pacific Community (SPC)



Mock Dialogue with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability

11 – 12 March 2019, Port Vila Vanuatu

In a similar vein to the Universal Periodic Review, dialogues with the UN treaty body committees can be a daunting experience. The concluding observations depend largely on the evidence presented by the state delegation and so it is imperative they are well prepared and informed to ensure a relevant and useful outcome. In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Melanesian Spearhead Group, SPC RRRT facilitated a mock dialogue under PCEP to prepare the delegation of 8. The value of this, and the support provided by SPC RRRT was acknowledged by the government following their successful CRPD dialogue.



Sexual and Gender Based Violence Workshop – Alternative Methods of Giving Evidence

25 – 28 March 2019, Apia Samoa

Hosted by the Pacific Islands Law Officers Network in partnership with SPC RRRT this regional workshop convened 67 members of the judiciary, prosecutors, police investigators and policy makers and 43 other stakeholders including national human rights institutions, government ministries and the private sector.

The aims of the workshop were to introduce participants to the 'General Principles and Special Measures (Alternative Methods of Giving Evidence) for SGBV Complainants in the Pacific', help develop skills for interviewing vulnerable witnesses and to establish a network aimed at supporting the introduction of special measures across the region.



I am particularly grateful for the support of the Pacific Community's Regional Rights Resource Team who have been working on the eradication of family and sexual and gender based violence in the Pacific for a number of decades and welcome their partnership with PILON in holding this forum; bringing together many accomplished and dedicated officers who are responsible for the way the law and justice system in their respective countries responds to this prevalent and serious crime

Mr Lemalu Hermann Retzlaff,
Former Attorney General of Samoa and PILON Chair

Regional Dialogue on National Mechanisms for Reporting, Follow-Up and Implementation (NMIRF)

11 – 12 April 2019, Nadi Fiji

Pacific Island Countries regularly receive recommendations from the treaty bodies to which they are party. These can number into the hundreds and often be overlapping and overwhelming. The coordination of their implementation is a challenge felt globally and is exacerbated by similar responsibilities towards the Sustainable Development Goals and national development plans.

The solution that has become to evolve in parts of the world is the establishment of NMIRFs – commonly a multi-ministerial body with representation of all implementation actors including NHRIs, CSOs, the private sector, faith and traditional leaders, judiciary, parliamentarians and bureaus of statistics. 74 regional stakeholders from these groups attended the event where it was acknowledged that the NMIRF evolution has been organic and uncoordinated - the dialogue was therefore an opportunity to share lessons learned at the national and international level and to identify common challenges and solutions.

Participants largely found themselves to be facing the same issues – around data collection, prioritisation of resources, competing priorities, siloed approaches and staff turnover. It was also widely agreed that NMIRFs could address many of these challenges but that there was no ‘one size fits all’ and any such body must be tailored to suit the national context. The outcomes (more below) drew international attention and the Human Rights Council, encouraged by a bloc of states, subsequently passed resolution A/HRC/42/L.3 meaning there will now be a further five regional dialogues around the world, to build directly on the Nadi Dialogue

“ 2016 was the second time that we had presented our universal periodic review report to the Human Rights Council. Following that, we came back home and established the Human Rights Task Force. Since then, we have been following this work plan ... it really facilitates how we get our lead agencies together in order to be able to assess some of the outstanding things that we need to do. That’s why it’s important to have the monitoring framework, because it also eases the burden, the reporting burden on us ”

Peseta Noumea Simi,
CEO Samoa Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Chairperson of NMIRF



'The Pacific Process'

April 2019 – June 2020

At the conclusion of the Nadi NMIRF Dialogue participants agreed there were common challenges and solutions that could inform future NMIRF establishment and strengthening across the Pacific. SPC RRRT were mandated to coordinate a drafting and consultation process on the outcomes document of the dialogue and a guiding document. After several rounds a final draft achieved consensus and the 'Pacific Principles of Practice (for NMIRFs)' was created.

This framework will provide guidance to states and development partners in their efforts to build effective NMIRFs, adopt integrated approaches to implementation of development plans, the SDGs and human rights obligations, and improve the realisation of rights at the grassroots level.



Universal Periodic Review State Report Writing Workshop

23 - 24 May 2019, Bikenibeu Kiribati

The preparatory workshop for the Kiribati UPR State report was held from 23rd to 24th May, attended by 18 members of the Human Rights Taskforce, including staff of the Human Rights Division. The write-shop commenced with an introduction to the 3rd cycle of the UPR reporting process. The UN guidance note for preparing state reports was covered with the members, identifying the key information and how it can be presented. As a result of the UPR stakeholders reporting workshop, five joint reports and three individual UPR stakeholders reports were submitted toward Kiribati's 3rd UPR review.



SADATA Inception Workshop

27 – 28 May 2019

SADATA is Samoa's online planning and tracking tool that helps to cluster and coordinate the implementation of human rights obligations and recommendations. It also enables Samoa to track these actions against their national development plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. Through PCEP technical assistance was provided to users to roll out this innovative technology, which is open source and available to all other Pacific Island Countries.

The two-day training data was attended by 48 future users from key government ministries, the Bureau of Statistics, Law Reform Commission, NHRI and civil society. Of those who completed the evaluation 100% said it increased their capacity to develop National Action Plans with the event being viewed as 'excellent' by 83% and 'good' by the remaining 17%.



“SADATA helps in tracking progress on reporting and what is needed to support these reports”
Workshop participant

UPR Planning & NMIRF Establishment Workshops

24 – 28 June 2019, Honiara
Solomon Islands

Following the Nadi dialogue a request was made by the government of the Solomon Islands for technical assistance to determine the need and potential structure of a NMIRF. A workshop was subsequently convened with representatives from multiple ministries to explore the potential models and determine which best suited the national context.

At the conclusion of the meeting a unanimous agreement was reached on a proposed structure. RRRT will continue to support the ongoing establishment efforts.

This mission was also an opportunity to discuss implementation of Solomon Island's 2nd UPR recommendations and start to plan for the upcoming 3rd review and reporting requirements. In total 32 participants government stakeholders attended these events.



Regional MPs Dialogue and the Port Vila Declaration

5 – 7 November 2019, Port Vila Vanuatu

In 2015 parliamentarians from across the Pacific convened to discuss their role with respect to human rights. At its conclusion they signed the 'Denarau Declaration', which contained a series of commitments to advancing the implementation of rights through their role. The PCEP regional dialogue was an opportunity to take stock of progress since Denarau and discuss a number of priority human rights issues, namely climate change and how rights intersects with Pacific cultures and faiths.

The fruitful nature of the discussions led participants to agree a follow up declaration, committing Pacific MPs to action with regards to the priority issues under consideration and towards the establishment/strengthening of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-Up.

The Port Vila Declaration is an important and powerful advocacy tool that fundamentally strengthens the basis on which engagement with MPs can take place towards their responsibilities towards human rights and good governance. Following the dialogue nearly a third of MPs reported that they would use the outcomes to establish a NHRI or NMIRF.



84th Extraordinary Outreach Session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

2 – 6 March 2020, Apia Samoa

Of all the achievements and landmarks of PCEP, CRC84 stands out from the crowd. This was a historic event. Never before has a United Nations treaty body held a regional outreach session outside of Geneva or New York. For years people have called for the treaty body system to make itself more accessible to rights holders through such meetings but until 2020 this had never happened. PCEP advocacy over the course of many months brought the Committee on the Rights of the Child to Samoa where they undertook dialogues with state delegations from Cook Islands, FSM and Tuvalu, CSOs from Kiribati and of course children from across the region.

Over 100 children attended CRC84, many of them every day. 97% reported they had learned about the rights of the child with 70% having changed their views on child rights as a result. 84% noted they had made new contacts that would help them in advocating for the protection of the rights of the child.

“What I have learnt this week is that every right comes with a responsibility. I learned about the role children have to play in their own development. It gave me hope and inspiration to stand as an individual”

..... Child attendee at CRC84

“..... The decision to come to Samoa was one of the most important that the Committee has made. By meeting the locals, the children, the opportunity has given a deep insight into the people. It is nothing like reading a report. It is possible to feel and understand so much more when the people speak. It has provided a much deeper understanding”

..... Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

CRC84 Side Events Programme

To fully take advantage of the many children, NGOs, government representatives and human rights defenders who travelled to Apia for CRC84, SPC RRRT organised and managed a full side and parallel events programme. Over the course of the week 16 events were held and these were attended by over 700 people. Topics under discussion included ‘Faith, culture and human rights’, ‘early childhood intervention and child protection’ and ‘climate change and human rights’. In keeping with Article 12 of the Convention children moderated these events, which were mostly held in a Pacific ‘talanoa’ style format.



“..... The side events were extraordinary. We have never had such important exchanges during a session in Geneva. Never have I seen so much free dialogue. That also helps a lot to understand the cultural context”

..... Committee on the Rights of the Child Chairperson
Mr. Luis Ernesto Pedernera Reyna

Country Missions: Committee Members on the Rights of the Child

9 – 10 March, Suva Fiji | 9 – 10 March, Port Vila Vanuatu

At the conclusion of CRC84 two of the committee members, Philip Jaffe and Bragi Guðbrandsson, travelled to Vanuatu and Fiji respectively to undertake a two day outreach mission with the objective of raising awareness on the rights of the child. During the two day visits the members met with a range of children and stakeholders from government, civil society and development partners. The exchanges were poignant and emotional as children explored the challenges and difficulties experienced in their day to day lives. In both Fiji and Vanuatu the respective committee members delivered a guest public lecture at the national universities, attended by in excess of 250 people.



CRC, Vanuatu



CRC, Samoa



CRC, Fiji



CRC, Vanuatu



CRC, Fiji

CRC, Samoa



CRC, Samoa



CRC, Samoa

#ChildRightsPacific



The background of the slide is a vibrant teal color with a large, intricate, stylized green leaf pattern. The leaves are layered and overlapping, creating a sense of depth and movement. The pattern is centered and fills most of the frame.

OUTPUT 3

**Empowering Actors of
Change**

Sustainable and lasting change requires empowered groups, communities and individuals who can advocate for the realisation of their human rights. Output 3 of PCEP aimed to do just that by working with civil society organisations, young people and other actors of change.

Civil society organisations come in all different shapes and sizes, play a variety of roles and aim towards achieving many different goals. In the Pacific these entities can often provide essential services and speak up on behalf of the most marginalised groups in society. Financial / human resources and technical expertise play a large part in determining organisational impact and these can often be in short supply. However, these organisations often understand the challenges and potential solutions better than most as they are directly integrated into the very communities or groups who they seek to represent. The PCEP strategy was first to build on RRRT's work in this area which works directly with small and medium sized enterprises to build institutional capacity so that the passion and knowledge on which they are founded can be effectively translated into impact for their intended beneficiaries.

The second part of the strategy for Output 3 was to develop the skillsets and capacities of the Pacific youth, and this served a dual purpose. Firstly, young people are rights holders themselves and under the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be involved in decision making which affects them. Therefore a fundamental need exists for young skilled advocates who can speak from experience, and with authority and agency. Secondly, young people today are the leaders of tomorrow. Developing a generation of rights-conscious people who will go on to become politicians, civil servants, lawyers, judges, academics, business owners, teachers, etc. will contribute towards a society that values and realises human rights for all.



Pacific People Advancing Change Regional Conference

12 - 15 March 2019, Nadi Fiji

The Pacific People Advancing Change (PPAC) programme aims to build advocacy capacity among Pacific CSOs engaged with a range of campaign issues that have a human rights dimension. These organisations often consist of only a very small handful of people who are front-line service providers who understand the issues better than most. However, they are largely without expertise in fundraising or grant management and can struggle to access the resources required to realise their potential impact. PPAC seeks to address this through a package of assistance that includes advocacy training workshops, ongoing mentoring and the provision of small grants.

This regional conference, facilitated by PCEP, brought together the grantees for the first time to enhance learning, skills and advocacy practice through South-South exchange. 40 participants from 24 grantee organisations attended and 100% said they would use their new knowledge in their campaigns.



“ This dialogue helped to improve my knowledge from the experience of other PPAC campaigns. With the capacity presentation from RRRT this will also help the implementation of our campaign ”

PPAC Grantee

Universal Periodic Review Shadow Report Writing Workshop

13 March 2019, Suva Fiji

The UPR is a valuable opportunity for CSOs to share the results of their work and institutional knowledge to inform the national review and subsequent recommendations, the latter of which can be used as an advocacy platform during the ensuing implementation period. Report writing workshops of this nature bring together civil society organisations to inform them of the reporting requirements and to discuss collaboration through joint submissions.

At this workshop 16 civil society representatives were provided with the technical knowledge to decide whether and how to submit a shadow report to the UPR. Of those who participated 100% reported an increase in knowledge and 60% stated their organisation would be leading on, or contribute to a shadow report.



Universal Periodic Review, CRC, CEDAW & CRPD Shadow Report Writing Workshop

20 -24 May 2019, Bikenibeu Kiribati

42 CSOs and government representatives attended these four days of capacity building aimed at; (1) informing civil society of upcoming CRC, CEDAW and CRPD shadow reports; (2) building civil society capacity to submit shadow reports; and (3) informing members of the Human Rights Taskforce on the reporting guidelines for their forthcoming 3rd cycle Universal Periodic Review report and commence drafting.



VPrize Capacity Building Programme

October - December 2019, Port Vila Vanuatu

VPrize is a community based group founded to help mobilise, educate and advocate for the rights of persons of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity. As a local network of diversity their mission is to strengthen community leadership in areas of sexuality and gender identities.



Through PCEP assistance was provided to 26 staff and volunteers for a programme of institutional strengthening to build the organisational capacity through the development of a new strategic plan and implementation of new financial management tools.

Community Justice Supervisors Training

2 – 6 September 2019, Port Vila Vanuatu

As in many Pacific cultures, community life is central to the lives of people in Vanuatu. The Probation Service works with communities to manage offenders in their own communities. Community Justice Supervisors are at the heart of the Department's work. They are of high standing in their communities (usually chiefs, pastors or community leaders) and they volunteer their time to manage offenders with the support of Probation Officers.

At the request of the ni-Van government Purpose SPC/RRRT facilitated a workshop for 42 Community Justice Supervisors on the Penal Code Act of Vanuatu and how to protect and promote human rights in the course of their work.



“

We have to adjust and adapt our customs to suit the law and human rights which provides for the things we need to live a life of human dignity and peaceful community

ni-Van magistrate

”



Young Leaders Regional Dialogue

8 – 10 October 2019, Nadi Fiji

The regional young leaders' dialogue aimed at enhancing collaboration between young members of parliament, young business and civil society leaders to advance youth development with particular focus on gender, social inclusion and human rights.

A guiding principle of child rights is the concept of meaningful participation and the right to be heard in matters that affect you. The young leaders dialogue placed these concepts within its very design – a planning committee consisting of youth representatives from 8 Pacific countries was put in charge of all aspects of the planning, from the programme of speakers and events, to the communications strategy and M&E plan. The interest in youth-led initiatives such was apparent when over 1000 applications were received for the 84 delegate spots.



The dialogue provided a platform for young people to:

- Strengthen engagement with national and regional leaders and development partners to promote and uphold the principles of good governance;
- Discuss good governance issues, challenges, best practices and sustainable solutions to youth development; and
- Strengthen networks and relationships between young people to advance youth in governance.

At its conclusion the young leaders had come together to develop a draft declaration – the 'Nadi Young Leaders Declaration', which articulates a range of strategies and calls for action to empower young people to substantively contribute to the realisation of human rights and good governance across the region.



**COMMUNICATIONS
STRATEGY AND
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

At the outset of PCEP a communications, visibility and education strategy was developed to supplement the intended activity outcomes. This strategy aimed to achieve three things; (1) Raise awareness of PCEP activities and achievements to foster shared ownership and increased accountability; (2) Explore and communicate the synergy between human rights, Pacific cultures and faiths; and (3) develop educational resources aimed at supporting the institutions and areas of work addressed during the project.

Goal 1 was achieved through a variety of mediums – in total 175 tweets, posts, videos, newspaper and magazine articles, editorials and TV appearances, which were viewed by a huge audience of up to 5.8 million people. This included 505,000 trackable views and 34,000 retweets, shares and comments.

Goals 2 and 3 were achieved through a variety of activities, including SPC RRRT's first ever appearance on Fiji's primetime talkback TV show, participating in Human Rights Council side events and a 60 second 'vox pop' series comprising 25 people from across the Pacific exploring the links between rights, culture and faith. These activities, and more, are detailed in the following chapter.



FBC – ‘4 the Record’

10 February 2019, Suva Fiji

The convening of the high level dialogue on the Convention Against Torture gave SPC RRRT the opportunity to secure a 45 minute talkback show on FBC’s primetime show – ‘4 the Record’. This was the first time the organisation had enjoyed this level of exposure and was a chance to discuss the CAT event, PCEP, the broader programme work undertaken and the UK’s motivation for committing substantial funding to the region for the protection and promotion of human rights.



Commonwealth Day Celebrations / Launch of PCEP Communications Strategy

11 March 2019, Suva Fiji

To celebrate Commonwealth Day 2019 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and SPC RRRT jointly hosted a celebration of Pacific culture, faith and values and a discussion on how these can be an enabler of human rights in the region.

Forty-five youth participated in this debate, which also served as the launch of PCEP’s communication strategy. This strategy aimed to not only effectively communicate the activities and achievements of the project but also sought to establish a platform to explore the links between human rights, Pacific culture and values. Recognising that fears of rights clashing with traditional values and ways of life the communication strategy targeted increasing the understanding of how these can be mutually reinforcing, and thereby increasing understanding of the value of human rights in the Pacific and fostering national and local ownership of implementation.



#PacificValuesAndHumanRights Vox Pop Series

Launch date: March 2019

One of the biggest barriers to implementation in the Pacific is a widely held belief that human rights are a foreign concept at odds with culture and faith. The PCEP communications and visibility strategy designed a number of approaches and activities to address these fears by developing a 'contextualised' understanding of human rights, where the mutually reinforcing nature with culture and faith is better understood. The result of this would be an ability to convey human rights using trusted terms and values, fostering greater understanding and ownership.

A cornerstone of this strategy was the 60 second 'vox pop' series, which gave a diversity of people from across the Pacific the chance to explore any way in which they believed their culture or faith to be aligned with universal principles of human rights. The end result was a collection of 25 vox pops from 10 Pacific countries viewed more than 6000 thousand times online and used as a conversation starter at multiple other PCEP events.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PkLNDB2CpUA>

Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs – Human Rights Council Side Event

7 March 2019, Palais des Nations Geneva Switzerland

As part of the UK's chairpersonship of the Commonwealth Forum of NHRIs it convened a side event to explore innovation in monitoring the implementation of recommendations from the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and the SDGs. In recognition of Samoa's leading role in their development of SADATA (the national deployment of the open source IMPACT software) PCEP was invited to participate in the panel discussion to highlight its work and role in the development and use of the tool.



Human Rights law Digest, Volume 6

Publication date: May 2019

The Pacific Human Rights Law Digest (Volume 6) is a collection of recent human rights case law from across the Pacific for use by legal practitioners, magistrates, judges, policy makers and advocates as precedents and tools for policy initiatives.

This edition, launched in Apia to a crowd of 65 such practitioners, focuses on cases dealing with sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sex characteristics.



How to Establish a Pacific NHRI: Samoa Case Study

Publication date: May 2019

The Samoa NHRI was established in 2013 and took only three years to become the Pacific's only 'A' accredited institution, and in 2020 remains so. Their establishment and development journey is informative for other island nations wishing to establish their own institution and so a nine-chapter video resource was produced under PCEP charting their story and looking into all of the elements that makes a successful institution.

The resource covers topics such as the mandate needed for an NHRI, being effective with minimal resources, how to engage with the international system and exploring the relationship between rights, culture and faith.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZOyghqmMI>

Media Meet

13 September 2019, Suva Fiji

The regional and national press was a key partner for PCEP and the execution of the communications and visibility strategy. To foster understanding of the aims of the project, and raise awareness of future activities a media lunch was hosted where the press were given the opportunity to learn about past successes and ask questions about the aims of PCEP.

This also allowed for RRRT to discuss and share with the members of the media, its core work on human rights across the Pacific member countries and ways that the media could be engaged as a partner for greater advocacy of human rights in the region.

PCEP Carbon Offsetting Programme

Launch date: 5 June 2019

Climate change is one of the most pressing issues in the Pacific, threatening the human rights of thousands of people spread across millions of square kilometres of ocean. Wherever possible PCEP sought to utilise video technology to reduce the carbon footprint of the project. However, this was not always possible and many of the big successes over its lifecycle came from regional gatherings.

To mitigate the impact of this travel, PCEP offset the carbon emissions from all staff and participant travel leading up to world environment day on 5 June when the offsetting programme was announced. It is hoped that this will encourage other donors to require future programmes to incorporate similar policies to play a small role in addressing one of the biggest threats to human rights in the region.



Engaging with the Human Rights Council by Video Statement: A Guide for NHRIs

Publication date: January 2020

The Samoan Ombudsman's statements to the Human Rights Council during the PCEP funded visit were historic for being the first ever made by a Pacific Island NHRI, and pave the way for future engagement of this nature – a core function of any effective institution. However, delivering these in person is not realistic given the limited resources and high associated costs of travelling to Geneva.

To address this, technical assistance was subsequently provided to deliver statements via video and the Ombudsman delivered his first message this way to the 42nd Human Rights Council. This process was documented and turned into a video resource for other Pacific NHRIs to guide them through the technical and strategic process of making video statements.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g7Em5DB38wE>



NMIRFs and Effective Implementation in the Pacific

Publication date: April 2020

Treaty ratification and reporting should be a means to an end – the improved implementation and realisation of human rights. The Nadi NMIRF Dialogue and subsequent Pacific Principles (above) identified ways in which that can be achieved in a region with limited human and financial resources and competing priorities.

To consolidate this learning and development of guiding principles a video resource exploring the following areas was produced for Pacific Island Countries; (1) the value of ratification within the Pacific context; (2) effective case studies of implementation across the Pacific; (3) the nature and value of NMIRFs in achieving comprehensive, coordinated and effective implementation of rights, national development priorities and the SDGs.

Human Rights in the Pacific: A Situational Analysis

Publication due mid-2020

This situational analysis provides an overview of some of the challenges, achievements and progress in various areas that reflect on the duty of Pacific governments to protect, promote and fulfil human rights. The purpose and objectives of this publication are to:

- contribute to research available on the current human rights situation in the Pacific region;
- improve understanding of the human rights situation for partners working in the region and provide a base for decision-making and planning;
- support the creation of new laws, policies and strategies to improve the human rights situation in Pacific Island Countries (PICs), including the creation of national plans of action; and
- shed light on pertinent human rights issues in the countries and identify gaps to be addressed.

Data Collection and Analysis: An Introduction for NHRIs

Publication due 2020

The strength of an NHRI relies largely on its credibility and therefore statistics that are used as the basis for any findings and recommendations must be accurate and beyond reproach. However, it is unrealistic to expect that each NHRI will be able to employ a statistician (especially in the Pacific) and therefore internal capacity must be built to collect and analyse statistical information.

The publication, 'Data Collection and Analysis: An Introduction for NHRIs' is intended as an entry-level resource for institutions to guide them in their collection and use of data, and to help determine when outside expertise is required.



VALUE FOR MONEY & PARTNERSHIPS

Value for Money

Throughout PCEP there was a commitment to maximise the impact of each pound spent to improve the capacity of Pacific Island Countries to realise the human rights of their peoples. This was approached using a variety of different strategies.

- **M&E:** The M&E framework was regularly reviewed to ensure the collection of necessary data to assess VfM. Evaluation data was continuously used to inform subsequent activities and improve VfM (e.g. UK study tour - a focus group discussion with participants was facilitated to discuss whether the impact of the activity could have been achieved through other means. Lessons learned were incorporated into subsequent study tours.)
- **Ensuring effectiveness:** PCEP activities sought to identify the most effective approaches and solutions as opposed to always taking the lowest cost option. Scalability and sustainability were prioritised as part of this strategy. A good example of this was the decision to engage HURIDOCS as a partner in the NHRI small grant project to build a complaints/information management system for the Fiji Human Rights Commission. Their prior experience working with NHRIs across the world will ensure the highest standard of product for Fiji and mean that it will have wider use among other interested Commonwealth NHRIs.
- **Leveraging RRRT:** PCEP VfM was greatly enhanced through the relationships, networks and staff of RRRT. As the only regional human rights organisation with in-country officers across multiple Commonwealth countries RRRT minimised costs in a variety of ways

that would not be possible with other implementing partners. In this regard it is necessary to acknowledge the programme support provided to RRRT by the governments of Australia and Sweden.

- **Procurement:** The SPC procurement policy was adapted and adopted for PCEP which aimed to achieve VfM by addressing objectives of SPC RRRT / FCO / Commonwealth beyond the scope of the activity itself. This includes prioritising suppliers from the region and marginalised groups, to advance economic empowerment. It also includes ensuring a minimal impact on the environment by requiring all vendors to avoid the use of single use plastics and carbon offsetting the participation of all attendees at PCEP events.



Partnerships

Although partnerships are another strand of the value for money approach adopted by PCEP this warrants particular focus given the critical importance they played in delivering many of the impacts of this project. This strategy contained three elements; (1) capitalise on existing partnerships to deliver activities and outcomes; (2) identify and nurture new partnerships to deliver activities and outcomes in priority areas for Pacific Island Countries; (3) help build partnerships between governments, NHRIs, civil societies, MPs, judiciary, the United Nations and development partners to enhance their capacity to implement human rights.

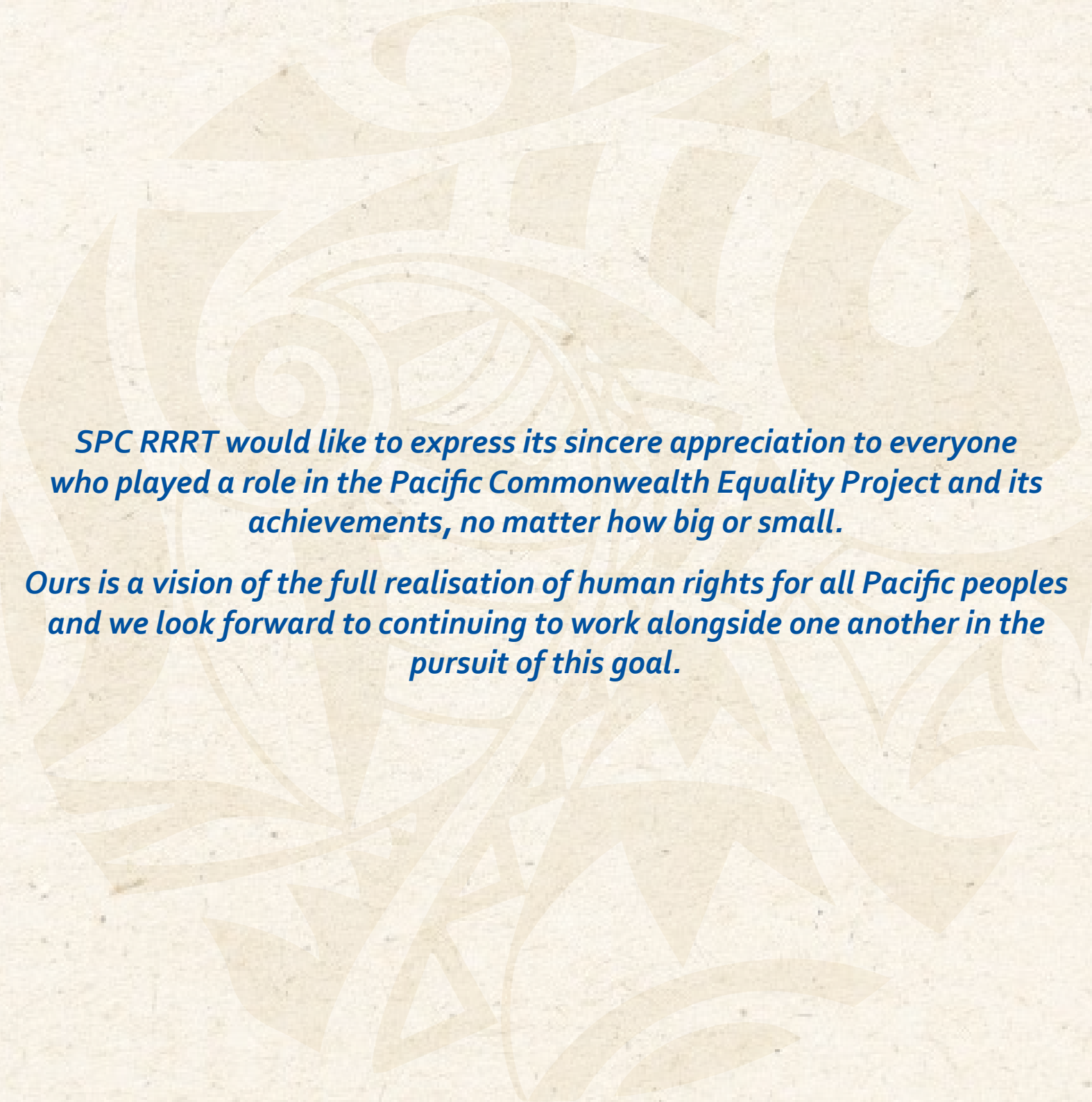
- **Existing partnerships:** RRRT, the Regional Office of the Pacific of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR ROP) and the Asia Pacific Forum for National Human Rights Institutions (APF) have a tri-partite agreement to collaborate on all NHRI work in the Pacific. All PCEP NHRI activities were therefore undertaken in partnership or consultation, enabling the NHRIs to benefit from respective areas of expertise. This approach also achieved cost-savings and enabled scaled up activities such as the Kiribati scoping mission, the most participatory of its kind to date by some distance. This work also naturally built on the pre-existing relationships between RRRT and the NHRIs of Fiji, Samoa and Tuvalu, further guaranteeing the sustainability of outcomes in the process.
- **New partnerships:** A number of new, exciting and lasting partnerships were forged through PCEP between RRRT and external organisations that will continue to deliver greater value for money for years to come and also support the continued implementation of project outcomes. These fruitful relationships started with working with the Convention Against Torture initiative to deliver the High Level Dialogue on CAT, which generated such significant follow-up interest that the partnership is continuing to provide technical assistance to Pacific states looking to ratify or implement the convention. The CAT High Level Dialogue was also an opportunity to collaborate with Universal Rights Group, which led to working together again on the delivery of the NMIRF Dialogue and development and dissemination of the Pacific Principles. RRRT has also built up its technology capacity by partnering with two prominent human rights software not for profit organisations – HURIDOCS to design and develop the Fiji NHRI information management system, and the Impact OSS Trust to further develop SADATA, Samoa's tracking and implementation tool.





PCEP went out on a partnership high with the Extraordinary Outreach of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Even obtaining consensus to bring the Committee to the Pacific was an achievement of joint advocacy and collaboration. The delivery of this event involved multiple partners – numerous United Nations offices based both in Geneva and the Pacific, the Government of Samoa, other Pacific governments, civil society organisations and of course SPC who set this all in motion through PCEP. The end result of this multi-stakeholder collaboration was the treaty body system being closer to the rights holders than ever before, the opportunity for hundreds of Pacific children to engage with and influence the Committee, which in itself became better informed of the region enabling the dialogue and recommendations to be more contextualised and relevant.

- ***Stakeholder partnership building:*** The aim of PCEP was to build the capacity of Pacific Island Countries to implement and realise the rights of their peoples and to achieve this it was prudent to build the capacity of the national implementing actors through strengthened partnerships. Activities such as the NHRI study tours and Geneva visit achieved this aim for the participants – ongoing relationships were built between participants (Pacific NHRIs and government representatives) and their UK and NZ peers and their stakeholders. Similarly at all regional events space was provided for networking and relationship building, in particular at the Young Leaders Dialogue where 94% of participants reported having new contacts they would use as a result of their involvement.



SPC RRRT would like to express its sincere appreciation to everyone who played a role in the Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project and its achievements, no matter how big or small.

Ours is a vision of the full realisation of human rights for all Pacific peoples and we look forward to continuing to work alongside one another in the pursuit of this goal.

