



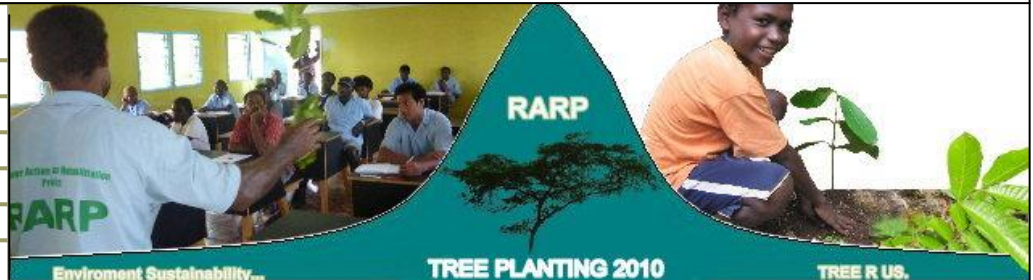
EARLY BIRD

Occasional Newsletter of the Recovery Action and Rehabilitation Project (RARP)
Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), Solomon Islands

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Why Environmental Sustainability?

"When we have cut down the last tree, polluted the last river, and cooked the last fish, then we will realize that we can't eat money!"

What is environment?

Our environment is the world around us or our surroundings. It includes our homes, the land and all that is within it including forests, mountains, rivers, streams, the sea, animals, plants, the air and people.

What is sustainability?

Sustainability means the ability to keep something going for a long time. **Sustainability** also means being able to meet the daily needs of people now, while planning for the needs of our future generations.

What is environmental sustainability?

Environmental sustainability is the ability to maintain the qualities that are valued in the physical environment. For example, most people want to maintain:

- their lives (human life)
- clean water, clean air, a suitable climate, etc. These are the capabilities of the natural environment that maintain the living conditions for people, plants and animals.
- the aspects of the environment that produce renewable resources such as water, timber, fish, solar energy.
- the functioning of society, despite the depletion of non-renewable resources.
- the quality of life for all people and beauty of the environment.



Sustainability issues arise wherever there is a risk of difficult or irreversible loss of the things or qualities of the environment that people value. Whenever there are such risks there is a degree of urgency to take action.

Why do we care about the environment?

If we do not care about how we use the water, land and air, resulting in our food, water and air being contaminated, we can get sick. By protecting our environment, we protect our health.

Improving environmental health however takes time because it often requires 4 different kinds of changes:

1. Changes to improve water systems, housing, or other things we build for ourselves (infrastructure).



2. Changes in what we buy, such as refusing to buy junk food, toxic cleaning products, or products wrapped in plastic (consumption).



3. Changes in our habits, such as regular hand washing, separating garbage so that more can be recycled, or growing crops in new ways (behavior).



4. Changes in how much power local people, companies, central governments, and others have in making decisions that affect the environment (political).



All of these changes also affect each other. Sharing information between and among members of our families, schools and village communities and working together to improve our environment will contribute to improving the general health of families and the people living in the community.

RARP's Development Partners:



RARP TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

School Principal Takes Up Tree Planting

by Ravin Dhari

Inspired by RARP's approach to re-planting of local tree species on sites where milling had been completed for the school construction work, Rarumana Community High School Principal, Allen Alenia has decided to continue planting local tree seedlings on his block of land on Rarumana.

Rarumana Primary is a Category 2 school of the RARP project that received assistance for the construction of one single classroom for its kindergarten and three latrines as well as the rehabilitation of two staff houses. All the timber for this project was extracted from tree resources supplied by the community and individual block owners. Mr Alenia was one of the block owners who provided trees and was very instrumental in supporting the good cause that RARP is promoting. RARP's approach is to give back to the communities what had been taken out of their forests.

In January 2010, following the milling of trees for the school construction work, the RARP Environment team visited Rarumana for the initial tree planting program. Under this program, RARP worked with the community to plant 120 tree seedlings (local species) in Mr Alenia's block. This motivated him and his family to plant another 740 local trees which increases the total on his block to 860.



Mr. Alenia and village elder at the area where they are planting trees.

The island of Vonavona where Rarumana is situated has been heavily logged in recent years by a number of Asian logging companies, who left a destructive environment with many local species having been cut and newly grown ones damaged and therefore unable to survive.

Mr Alenia is concerned about the destruction of local species of trees which have been logged for export. *"Logging has done so much damage to our Environ-*

ment and has given us nothing but total destruction", he says.

Mr Alenia acknowledged his wife's support and the key role she plays in helping out in the planting process. *"My wife is very supportive and has been very active in participating by planting trees. This is a very good development initiative that will benefit us economically and help us to sustain our environment. It makes you want to preserve your resources rather than destroy them,"* he says.

He elaborated further that RARP's approach supports the idea of preserving our resources and encourages good sustainable harvesting. *"It's all for our children's future",* he adds. *"RARP's Tree Planting Program has helped shape me to be more responsible for my Environment. I will continue to re-plant as many trees as possible and encourage others in the community to do so".*

Not only that, but the program has helped build the community spirit in individual block owners who have been able to work together and provide support to each other. Participation is very evident, as many of the block owners involved have actually increased the number of trees planted.

Initially a total of 7 block owners were involved in RARP's Tree Planting Program, but 8 more block owners have joined in to plant trees as well, even though they did not have any tree cut down for the RARP project.

To gain the interest of other individuals and families in the community is a clear indication of the success and impact of the RARP Environment program and this is considered a tremendous achievement.



No School today!... Youngsters in Gizo Western Province enjoy the one day holiday from school for "Protect Our Environment for Better Living - Friday 17th September 2010"

DOT NEWS

TRANSFORMATION - TITIANA



Kerapuke Toben (United Church Education Secretary).



Children at Titiana School

Transformation at Titiana - RARP Project Manager John T Boveington together with Kerapuke Toben (United Church Education Secretary) visits Titiana CHS / Primary School. Great improvements were seen, children enjoying new classrooms and desks, new school committee formed, preparations for official RARP handover underway

MARCO KOOLS



Marco Kools (Education Specialist, UNICEF, Honiara) and Adi Galokepoto (RARP Whole School Development Consultant) in the RARP office, Gizo

National Authorizing Office Support Unit



Left to Right: Philippe de Hollain (Finance Expert), Angelo & Teiba Mamu in RARP office, Gizo 22nd September

RARP's Development Partners:



FIRST MONITORING & EVALUATION OF TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

by Nancy Kwalea

This year RARP commissioned its first formal monitoring and evaluation of the tree planting program which was conducted from February to May 2010. The field data was collected by two independent monitors and NRDF forester, Steven Suti put together the report, a copy of which is now available with RARP. A total of 30 Tree Planting sites were visited to record the average tree heights, mortality rates and comments on causes of mortality.

RARP, NRDF and the women, men, girls and boys in these 30 communities had worked together to plant a total of **14,207** seedlings since the program started in 2009. Out of the total **13,124** seedlings were planted in milling sites while **1083** were planted by private plot owners who had been motivated by the RARP program of Sustainable Forest Management carried out in collaboration with NRDF.

11 different timber tree species were used in the planting program. The data proved that local timber tree species are doing very well on sites they were planted except for a few isolated situations.

The lowest mortality rate was **8.88%** which was in Salakana in the Choiseul Province. For the Western Province, the lowest mortality rate was **12%** which was recorded for Irigila on Vella Lavella. The highest mortality was **43.7 %** recorded for Kolokolo on Vella Lavella island and the highest mortality rate for Choiseul Province was recorded for Jengunu with a rate of **29%**.



Plants which were dead had not been properly raised in a nursery before planting out. They were planted out as bare root

plants, and therefore were not able to withstand the field conditions, compared to properly raised seedlings in the nursery which had already developed roots and therefore could uptake their own nutrients soon after planting out in the field. Most of the seedlings had been transported by canoe from the same island or another island, while some were collected in the vicinity of the planting sites.

The handling techniques too were fine, except for a few isolated occasions where rough sea had interfered with the transportation of the seedlings which may have contributed to some of the mortality rate.

"A BRIGHT NEW START FOR TITIANA SCHOOL"

by Ravin Dhari



New Titiana School Committee

Months after the tragic earthquake/Tsunami, children in Titiana were left with nothing but tents as classrooms for their learning environment. Thank you to RARP through the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MEHRD) funded by NZ Government, UNICEF, EU and SIG, funds were available to rebuild the whole school infrastructure. To date, Children of Titiana Primary School are blessed with a brighter future and a new Start for its Learning

Environment. Prior to its completion, Titiana Primary School was one of RARP's most difficult projects to implement as the school committee struggled to implement its mandate. On the 6th of September 2010, a new Committee of 10 members, predominantly females, was set up under the authorities of the United Church Education Authority to carry on with the existing duties left by the previous committee.

Speaking on behalf of the United Church Education Authority, the Secretary Mr. Kerapuke Toben mentioned that the new committee is a fresh start for Titiana School towards building a better learning environment for the children of Titiana.

Involving women could be the way forward for Titiana School—a woman was elected as the new Head Mistress to replace the current Head Master. Mrs. Taumeri Anderson was elected as the new Head Mistress for Titiana Primary. Equipped with a Secondary teachers Qualification, Mrs. Anderson, is delighted to be the new Head Mistress for Titiana Primary School and has a strong determination to manage and run the school as a higher and better educational institution.—for quality education and a better learning environment. It's a Fresh New Start!!

RARP'S ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS HAVING AN IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES

by Nancy Kwalea

RARP's Environmental Sustainability Program is an effort towards best practice in the areas of sustainable forest management and environmental health education focused on safe and sustainable practices in Waste Management and Water and Sanitation for disaster-affected communities.

Sustainable Forest Management and Environmental Health Messages:

Our infrastructure implementation involves the milling of timber for classrooms, staff houses, latrines, ablution blocks and furniture.

RARP & Communities in Western & Choiseul Province planted

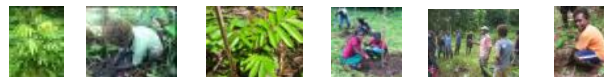
14,207 Trees
(11 Local Species) in 2009

The Development Support team works closely with the Infrastructure team to get information on completed milling sites and plans its environmental awareness around these sites.

The team does pre-assessment visits to the milled sites to measure the gap created by the milling and the tree species that grow well on that soil type, and find out if there are healthy seedlings already growing in the vicinity of the milling areas. This information helps the team to determine and bring along the correct number and species of seedlings, usually purchased from communities doing local tree nurseries to sell to RARP for this Program.

Community Open Forums are held in the evenings where women, men, boys and girls come together to learn about Sustainable Forest Management, the impacts of large scale natural resource developments on the natural environment and lives of affected communities, safe health and hygiene practices, safe garbage disposal, water and sanitation issues. Questions are asked and answered during these forums. They are then invited to join the RARP team in a tree planting exercise on milled sites the next day, which are attended by adults and children alike. The boys and girls who come along enjoy these sessions and treat them as 'fun games' as they participate in measuring and marking the areas to plant the seedlings and actually do some of the planting.

As a result of this program, more and more requests for assistance in tree planting are coming from different communities and some people have gone ahead and independently planted or done nurseries of indigenous trees.



SAVE THE CHILDREN YOUTH CENTER OPENING - MILE SIX, GIZO.



Save the Children - Mile Six Youth Center

Save The Children Australia (SI Field Office) opened one of its Youth Centres on the 14th of September 2010 at Mile Six, West of Gizo Island. The event marked a mile stone for Save The Children in its goal of supporting and contributing to an improved livelihood of young people in various communities they work with in the Solomon Islands.

The opening was marked with Speeches from Save the Children Reps in the SI Field Office and

the Melbourne Office as well as various key stakeholders from the Provincial Government and Youth Representatives in the Community.

RARP was represented by Tangolo Hivu (IT Support Officer) and Ravin Dhari (Admin Support Officer) at the Opening Ceremony. The Opening Ceremony concluded with various entertainments from participating youth Groups that came under Save the Children's Youth Outreach Program, sweet panpipe sounds from Tapurai Panpipe Group from Simbo Island and Refreshments.

RARP's Development Partners:



RARP - SCHOOL HANDOVER STORIES

CLASSROOM LIKED FOR ADEQUATE LIGHTING

By Nancy Kwalea

Class 3 pupil, nine year old Zelda Max was quick to describe the difference between her old classroom and the new double-classroom for Ombobulu Primary School on Rannonga Island, built under RARP which is rehabilitating or rebuilding 108 schools damaged or totally destroyed by the April 2007 earthquake and tsunami that hit the Western and Choiseul Provinces.

Explaining to the Early Bird team after the handover ceremony of the Ombobulu PS Project that took place on 12 May 2010, Zelda said her old classroom was smaller and dark inside and was not very pleasant to be in. *"The new RARP classrooms are big. They have big space for us to move around and many windows. So it is brighter inside with plenty of light from the outside and lots of fresh air too", says Zelda.*

Zelda is not from Rannonga but is attending Ombobulu because her father is the Deputy Head teacher and Class 5 teacher in the school. They have been in this school for two years.

UNDER the RARP Project, Ombobulu Primary Project has one double classroom with an office, four pour flush toilets (2 for students and 2 for staff), and complementary items including four teachers' tables, four chairs and twenty double-seater classroom desks. No tank was provided as the school already had an existing ferro-cement tank which can supply water for the pour flush toilets. The complimentary items have been provided as part of betterment for the school.



Above: School Children at Obobulu

Sign Board mark the school handover ceremony at Totoku School - Simbo, Western Province

Nancy Kwalea giving a speech during the school handover at Obobulu

WOMEN PLAY A KEY ROLE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF RARP PROJECTS

by Nancy Kwalea

Women in most of the communities where RARP is implementing have continued to play an active role in both the infrastructure and development tracks of the Project. They engage in carrying timber from milling sites as well as sand and gravel to the project sites, apart from cooking and feeding men and boys engaged in the building constructions. Many are on the front line when it comes to practical tree planting following RARP's sustainable forest management awareness. They also bring along children to join in what turns out to be fun for them.

The projects on Simbo were a good example of this quality, as heard in an interview with two women leaders on Lengana. RARP heard how women in Nusa Simbo, Riguru and Lengana were mobilized to undertake the carrying of sand and gravel to the project sites.

"The woman behind mobilizing us was the Late Rachel Kio. When she came here for project agreement signing, she called a meeting of the women and encouraged us to mobilize all other women in the three communities to form a committee on Lengana and sub-committees on Riguru and Nusa Simbo to ensure that sand and gravel were taken to project sites before the projects started,"* One of them recalled.

The committee and sub-committees that eventuated from this initial meeting worked very hard with the women in the communities collecting sand and gravel and transporting them by canoe to project sites. Women in each of these communities were responsible for transportation to their respective project sites.

One of them recalled that the initial lot of sand were washed away by the rain before implementation started as there was some delay. *"We had to start all over again when it was finalized that the project implementation will begin."* she said.



Simbo Women



Simbo women dancing during the school handover ceremony

*The Late Rachel was the only female Infrastructure Officer on RARP. She passed away in March 2009.

SIMBO IMPRESSED WITH RARP IMPLEMENTATION

By Ravin Dhari

During RARP's official handed over of 3 of its projects on Simbo island on 2nd - 3rd September 2010, community representatives reaffirmed that the people of Simbo have been very grateful and impressed with the way these projects have been carried out by RARP and its contractors.. The Projects included Nusa Simbo Extension School, Lengana Primary School and Riguru Extension School.

Speeches were made by RARP, the Western Provincial Education Authority, and United Church Education Authority which were all represented, as well as the School Chairman and various community representatives.

Some parents in Nusa Simbo said the prefabricated double classroom took only two weeks to construct. The sense of ownership of the Project and participation of people was very evident. Parents shared their moments of appreciation and expressed how the Project has saved their children long walks to get to a school. It takes at least 2 kilometers for the children to either walk or paddle to Lengana Primary School.

Nusa Simbo and Riguru are Extension Schools of the Lengana Primary School. This is a huge relief for both the parents and children in these communities. Most people have thanked RARP for the tremendous work done in implementing the school projects, and also the donors for their funding Assistance. The parents' hope is that in due time, these schools will become primary schools and ultimately expand to secondary schools.

The ceremonies were marked with great entertainment and refreshment to show the communities' token of appreciation.

GOOD QUALITY BUILDINGS FOR TAPURAI

By Nancy Kwalea

The Tapurai Primary School Committee Chairman, Mr Philip Koinau and others in the community have praised RARP for good quality buildings it has provided for the school. Speaking at the official handover of the school project on Thursday 25th August 2010, Chairman Koinau said his community was very thankful to RARP and its funding agencies, NZ Government, European Union, UNICEF and the Solomon Islands Government for the assistance rendered for their



Above: Double Classroom
Left: Tapurai Staff House

school through the provision of three staff houses, three toilets, one prefabricated double classroom with an office and three student toilets, one for boys and two for girls.

He said the buildings were much needed after the 2007 tsunami and earthquake totally destroyed the school and the village which were located in this same area. The village has now been relocated while Tapurai Primary has been rebuilt on the same location. The community has renamed the school, '

Member for Simbo Ward, Honorable Belshazaar Sasa, the Superintendent Minister for Simbo Circuit, Rev Steven Taino and Education Officer of the Central West region of the United Church, Ezekiel Padakana, who also made speeches, echoed the same view that the buildings being provided by RARP are of a high quality, and not only that but they came with complementary items including bookshelves, 4 teachers' tables and 4 chairs, 120 single seater classroom desks, and food-safes for each of the three staff houses.

All officials that made speeches at the ceremony acknowledged that the rebuilding of this school was a gift from God and the community was encouraged to look after them and provide ongoing maintenance without depending on donors or the government.

At least nine members of Tapurai village on Simbo Island, Western Province died as a result of the disaster, besides total destruction of the village and school.



RARP's Development Partners:

