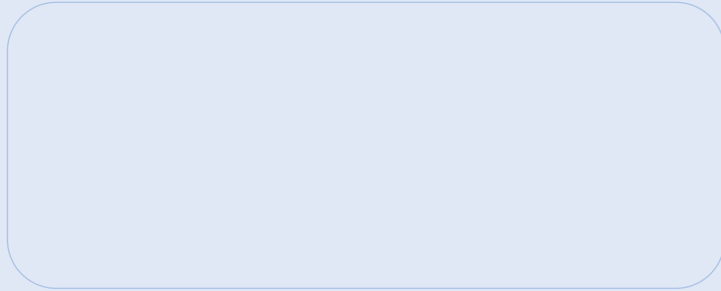


Peace Mail

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AUSTRALIA

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 9



act for peace

reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities



Map: BBC News

The Solomon Islands Christian Association's (SICA) vision is to promote Christian values and to work towards a just, compassionate, prosperous and equitable society that improves the quality of life for all Solomon Islanders.

Due to the deep involvement of churches in their communities, SICA has a key role in coordinating member churches to actively participate in community development activities such as:

- Humanitarian, disaster preparedness, relief work and assistance
- Ethical leadership and good governance
- Institutional development and strengthening and capacity building
- Education and health development
- Women and youth development
- Social justice and welfare services
- Literacy courses

act for peace helps SICA provide structured ways of engaging communities in these vital areas and in giving important feedback for improvement to education, health and other authorities. For just \$48, you can improve education for one school child. Your gifts will enable important work such as the education related example described overleaf. We are helping to grow the nation's future in peace and harmony!

act for peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).



act for peace

National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)

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THANK YOU for your support which allows us to make a positive difference in the lives of people in great need, such as those in the Solomon Islands. Through our partnerships with local agencies, we are able to ensure that the programs you support are high quality, targeted and sustainable. While our projects are growing, the deterioration of political and economic situations around the world, together with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, mean that there are many more people in need of urgent assistance.

To introduce a friend, get more information or give your suggestions and feedback, please e-mail Howard at hgraham@ncca.org.au or free call Howard or Jordan on **1800 025 101**.

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Better Primary School Education in the Solomons through Community Empowerment

Dear valued supporter

The views of local communities have frequently been excluded from the Government's education sector investment and reform program. I work for the Solomon Islands Christian Association (SICA) and we could no longer sit back and see opportunities and money being wasted because of no community involvement.

A pilot project in the central Malaita Province was designed to help empower communities to demand accountability from the education authorities. The communities identified and carried out their own roles and responsibilities, as well as established a community based tracking system for the delivery of primary education services. The communities were trained on various skills such as database collection and analysis, computer training and Government budgeting processes to enable them to track the delivery of education.

Parents and communities came to recognise that ultimately both they and the government are accountable to primary school children. Primary school children are part of every workshop, training and discussion, as a constant reminder of what primary education is all about. This is the only project where the voice and views of children are actually a part of the project structure and implementation arrangements.

Education is not free in the Solomons. Families make great sacrifices to pay school fees. The value of the project to the communities involved is clearly reflected by sentiments expressed at various discussions and workshops:

"For the first time they realise that communities have the power to demand accountability from education authorities."

"Authorities now understand that the Government budget process in the education sector is in the name of children."

"Education authorities now respect and, to some degree fear, communities are watching how they manage education programs."

From the students:

"All I want to see is teachers show up at schools and deliver lessons."

"I'm very happy to know that our views are being taken into account."

The above views and sentiments were expressed during the review of the project to which the Ministry of Education sent to the Director of Primary Schools.

SICA has a unique role to play in our ability to capture the real feelings of communities and to ensure that they are heard by Government decision makers.

Thank you for supporting us in this work.



Ezekiel

Ezekiel Alfred
Education Coordinator

Solomon Islands Christian Association Commission