

VIII. Pending Issues & Urgent Needs

Solomon Islands has around eighty languages and many of these languages are not written or standardized and it is the main issues that need safeguarding. You are likely to find more than one language spoken on one island with dialectal differences. Many children growing up in the urban centres could not speak their mother tongue but only speak the lingua franca Solomon Pijin.

Traditional knowledge and skills are under threat of vanishing in many parts of the country. As older generation are ageing mastery of such knowledge and skills is also decreasing. For instance, red feather money making on Temotu Nendo is an example. Only an elder in a community is still skillful making it but the red feather bird is becoming difficult to find because of environmental degradation.

The teaching and learning of culture, though is included in the school curriculum but is not emphasized strongly. The reason is that education system in Solomon Islands is exam driven therefore teaching of subjects like Maths, English and Science are given the top priority because they are examinable subjects.

The cultural mapping report for Solomon Islands was published in 2011. It contains baseline data that could be used by the government and interested international organizations like UNESCO to develop safeguarding strategies.

One of the problems encountered in already implemented safeguarding projects and initiatives is sustainability. For instance, Tarawasiwasi-Ni-Au Cultural Panpipers Association on Malaita has implemented a TMAC Project (Traditional Music, Art and Culture) which was funded by EU. The project had delivered the followings:

- Build a Training Centre
- Designed a Training Curriculum
- Trained Trainers to deliver the curriculum

- Co-exist with the Primary School so that school dropouts can do the TMAC programme.

The manager of the project highlighted the following challenges:

- After the project when the funding came to an end, the issue of sustainability is becoming a challenge;
- Seed money to continue the operations including getting the second phase of the plan realized;
- The programme needs recognition from the Solomon Islands Government through the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development under the National Qualifications Framework and Support.