



ISSUE 1

SUNGO NEWSLETTER

SUNGO's Executive Council, Management, and Staff Convene for Productive Retreat

5th February 2024, SUNGO Office, Vaitele Tai - The Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO) successfully held its Executive Council, Management, and Staff retreat on Friday, February 2nd, and Saturday, February 3rd, 2024. The retreat, held at Vaitele Tai, brought together key stakeholders to deliberate on essential matters concerning the organization's operations and strategic direction.



During the two-day retreat, participants engaged in constructive discussions and collaborative sessions aimed at reviewing and amending SUNGO's constitution, policies, and procedures. These deliberations were instrumental in enhancing the governance framework and operational efficiency of the organization, ensuring alignment with best practices and regulatory requirements.

Notable highlights of the retreat included presentations by distinguished guests, including Tai'i Cheri Robinson from the Tautua Project, who shared valuable insights and perspectives on community development initiatives. Additionally, Funemalafai Onosefulu Fuata'i a new member of the Council delivered a presentation on behalf of the Institute of Directors, offering expertise on corporate governance principles and effective leadership practices.

The retreat also served as an orientation for newly appointed council members, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of SUNGO's mission, vision, and strategic priorities. This orientation session was instrumental in fostering unity, cohesion, and shared commitment among council members towards advancing SUNGO's mandate of promoting social justice and sustainable development in Samoa.

Reflecting on the retreat, Lavea Peseta Lua Nafoi, the President of SUNGO, expressed gratitude for the active participation and meaningful contributions of all attendees. "The retreat provided a valuable opportunity for



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dialogue, reflection, and collective decision-making," Lavea remarked. "We are confident that the outcomes of this retreat will strengthen SUNGO's capacity to effectively serve our communities and advocate for positive change."

SUNGO remains committed to its mission of empowering civil society organizations, fostering collaboration, and advocating for the rights and well-being of marginalized communities. The organization looks forward to implementing the outcomes of the retreat and continuing its efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable society in Samoa.



Meeting between SUNGO CEO and British High Commissioner Strengthens Collaboration for Community Development



20th February 2024, SUNGO Office, Vaitele - The Chief Executive Officer of the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations, Fuimaono Vaitolo Ofoia, met with the British High Commissioner, His Excellency Gareth Hoar, at the organization's office. The meeting aimed to explore avenues for collaboration and support from the British High Commission to further enhance the

organization's impactful work within communities across the region. During the meeting, both parties engaged in fruitful discussions regarding potential areas of cooperation and assistance. His Excellency Gareth Hoar expressed his admiration for SUNGO's dedication to community development through training and capacity building programs. His Excellency particularly commended the organization's visible presence and active engagement with both governmental initiatives and community activities. Fuimaono expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet with His Excellency Gareth Hoar and welcomed the prospect of future collaboration with the British High Commission. He emphasized SUNGO's commitment to fostering sustain-

SUNGO signs MOU with the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Developments

11th January 2024, Government Building, APIA - The Ministry of Women Community and Social Development (MWCSD) and Samoa Umbrella for Non-Government Organization (SUNGO) joined services to provide locally based training for the 51 District Councils after both parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Thursday, 11th of January 2024. This partnership is valued at SAT200,180 for a period of twelve (12) months. The partnership will allow the Ministry to provide financial support under the NGO Capacity Support Program funds for the FY23/24. The primary objective of this partnership agreement is for SUNGO to develop good governance training modules for the purpose of training District Council members to assist them in managing their responsibilities and to enhance good governance on managing the District Development Program in their



own communities. This agreement will contribute to achieving Outcome 1: Improved Social Development and Outcome 2: Diversified and Sustainable Economy of the Pathway for the Development of Samoa (PDS). The agreement with SUNGO also underscore a continuous commitment to advancing good governance practices and community well-being to uphold principles of accountability, gender equality, and environmental consciousness. SUNGO is the umbrella body for NGOs in Samoa and has the capacity to provide training opportunities, information, advocacy and research to support community organizations. The agreement signifies a long-term partnership for the Ministry and SUNGO in promoting good governance principles and practice in our communities through the District Development Program.

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SUNGO has a productive discussion with Ms Hiroko Takegami



28th February 2024, SUNGO Office, Vaitele - We had the pleasure of hosting Ms. Hiroko Takegami, a representative from the Japanese Embassy, for a fruitful discussion today at the SUNGO office.

We are thrilled to announce that we have submitted a proposal for financial assistance under the Human Security Grassroots level, aimed at building a training facility to conduct SUNGO training for our members.

Ms. Hiroko Takegami took the time to visit our proposed site and conduct a thorough assessment.

The Executive Council members and staff are immensely grateful for Ms. Takegami's invaluable insights and unwavering support throughout the application process.

Ocean Director meets with SUNGO CEO



1st March 2024, SUNGO Office, Vaitele - This day marked a significant step forward in the realm of ocean conservation and sustainable development. The CEO of SUNGO had the pleasure of meeting with Leausalilo Leilani Duffy - Iosefa, the Oceans Director from the Conservation International Samoa, to explore a collaboration opportunity under the UK Ocean Grant Partnership 2024. At this pivotal meeting, both parties discussed a project aimed at harnessing collective efforts towards preserving our precious marine ecosystems. Stay tuned for more updates as SUNGO and CI embark on this journey together to make a meaningful impact on our oceans.



Empowering Women Farmers: The Success Story of Fuatino and the Mixed Farming Group

27th February 2024, MIX FARMING GROUP CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY INC, Faleasi'u Uta -

We are thrilled to share an inspiring tale of success straight from our own community. Meet Fuatino Moli, the President of the Mixed Farming Group in Faleasiu. Fuatino's journey began 24 years ago when she first set foot into the world of farming. Since then, she's not only cultivated crops but also her skills and knowledge.

In 2018, Fuatino joined SUNGO, seeking to enhance her abilities and take her farming endeavors to new heights. Little did she know, this decision would mark a turning point in her life. Through SUNGO's training programs, Fuatino delved into project management and basic finance, essential skills that transformed her approach to farming. These programs provided her with the tools and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of agricultural projects effectively. Fuatino is a living testament to the power of education and empowerment. She acknowledges that without SUNGO's guidance and support, she wouldn't have been able to develop her skills to the extent she has today. Her dedication and hard work, coupled with the resources provided by donor partners, have propelled her and the Mixed Farming Group to new heights of success. Today, Fuatino stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration for fellow farmers in Faleasiu and beyond. Her story is a reminder that with the right support and resources, anyone can achieve their dreams and make a meaningful impact in their community. We are incredibly proud of Fuatino's accomplishments, and the strides made by the Mixed Farming Group. Their dedication to sustainable agriculture and continuous learning sets a shining example for us all.



CEO of SUNGO, Fuimaono Vaitolo Ofoia presented at the Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions - PASAI Women Symposium

14th February 2024, Taumeasina Island Resort, Moataa - The CEO of SUNGO (Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations), delivered a compelling presentation on the vital role of Accountability and Transparency in governance at the PASAI Women Symposium held at Taumeasina on February 14th, 2024. In his presentation, Fuimaono underscored the significance of accountability and transparency as fundamental pillars of good governance. He emphasized that robust public sector accountability, encompassing legal and reporting frameworks, organizational structures, strategies, procedures, and actions of public entities, is essential for ensuring the efficient and effective utilization of public resources. Furthermore, Fuimaono highlighted the transformative impact of transparency in disclosing how public funds and resources are utilized. Transparent practices not only combat cor-



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ruption but also enhance governance, foster accountability, and bolster public confidence and trust in government institutions. Such transparency, he argued, is indispensable for advancing peace, justice, strong institutions, democracy, economic growth, and development both within nations and across regions. The symposium, attended by a diverse audience of stakeholders from both national and international, provided an invaluable platform for dialogue and collaboration on advancing gender equality, empowering women, and promoting inclusive governance practices.



Fuimaono concluded his address by calling for collective action and sustained commitment to uphold



accountability and transparency principles, thereby fostering a culture of integrity, responsibility, and trust in public administration. SUNGO remains dedicated to championing initiatives that promote sustainable development, social justice, and ethical governance in partnership with stakeholders across the region.

SUNGO in the United Nations Convention against Corruption



26th March 2024 - Second & final day of UNCAC Review Team country visit for Samoa's Implementation Review.

SUNGO Representative attends Validation Meeting

19th February 2024 - SUNGO Team Leader, Ms Faapi to Opetaita representing the Civil Society Organizations at the Sector Advisory Group for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning SQs (Samoa Qualifications) validation meeting.



SUNGO meets with Mr Sean Bradley and Ms Antonia Wong from the World Bank

5th March 2024, SUNGO Office, Vaitele

SUNGO had the privilege of hosting Mr. Sean Bradley and Ms. Antonia Wong from the World Bank at SUNGO Office. SUNGO CEO had a productive meeting with them, discussing potential support for the Government and Civil Society on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. This is a crucial step towards



creating a more inclusive society where everyone has equal opportunities to thrive! Additionally, the World Bank mission focused on exploring ways to support the District Development Project. Together, we delved into analysis, operational guidelines, and processes to ensure effective and sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Stay tuned for more updates on our collaborative efforts towards positive change! Together, we can make a difference.

Celebrating the Unsung Heroes of SUNGO and Women Worldwide!

6th March 2024 - In celebration of the International Women's Day, SUNGO wants to shine a spotlight on three

incredible women whose dedication and hard work, alongside the invaluable support of SUNGO's volunteer from the Australian Volunteer International, have been the backbone of SUNGO's mission. Ms. Faapito Opetaiia, Ms. Temukisa Sione, and Ms. Onosaiilealofa Kitiona -



these remarkable individuals exemplify resilience, determination, and a relentless commitment to serving our communities through their work at SUNGO office.

Their tireless efforts behind the scenes often go unnoticed, but without them, SUNGO wouldn't be able to fulfill its crucial role in empowering and supporting our communities. From organizing events to advocating for change, from lending a listening ear to providing vital resources, these women embody the spirit of SUNGO in every action they take, with the added support and expertise brought by Ms. Isckra Martinez Carbajal, our AVI volunteer.

Let us also take a moment to recognize and express our heartfelt gratitude to all the women around the world who work tirelessly to make a difference. Your dedication inspires us all and fuels our collective mission to create a brighter, more inclusive future for everyone. Thank you for everything you do!

SUNGO Empowers Member Organizations with Child Protection Workshop Supported by Australian Volunteers Program



Friday, 15th March 2024, SUNGO Office, Vaitele Tai – The Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO) hosted a comprehensive workshop focused on Child Protection Policy implementation, benefiting its member organizations. This vital initiative was made possible through the generous support of the Australian Government via the Australian Volunteers Program.



Led by SUNGO Vice President, Saena Tialino Penaia, the workshop commenced with a solemn prayer, followed by insightful remarks from Ms. Ane Moananu, Program Manager of the Australian Volunteers Program in Samoa. Ms. Moananu expressed gratitude for SUNGO's collaborative efforts, particularly highlighting the invaluable contributions of Australian Volunteer, Ms. Isckra Martinez.

The primary aim of this collaborative endeavor is to unite civil society organizations, fostering knowledge exchange and capacity-building among members, especially regarding the formulation and implementation of Child Protection Policies. SUNGO acknowledges the paramount importance of safeguarding the rights and well-being of children within the realms of its programs and activities. This workshop underscores SUNGO's commitment to ensuring the highest standards of child protection. Workshop coordinators Ms. Faapito Opetai and Ms Isckra Martinez outlined several key objectives, including the establishment of clear guidelines and protocols for preventing and addressing child protection issues within organizations. Attendees commended SUNGO's efforts and encouraged the organization to persevere in its endeavours.



Celebrating Success: Saena Penaia, A Beacon of Achievement!

26th March 2024, Malie & Tafaigata - We are thrilled to shine a spotlight on the remarkable achievements of Saena Penaia, a longstanding member of the SUNGO Executive Council and an esteemed member of the Samoa Federated Farmers Incorporated. Saena's journey is a testament to dedication, hard work, and a passion for agriculture. As the largest supplier of cocoa in Samoa, Saena has not only carved a niche for himself but has also become a beacon of inspiration for fellow farmers and industry enthusiasts alike.



One of Saena's noteworthy contributions lies in his pivotal role as a supplier to the Cocoa Nursery of the Ministry of Agriculture at Nu'u.

Through this initiative, he has not only supported local agricultural endeavours but has also played a crucial part in fostering sustainable farming practices and nurturing the growth of future crops. Today, as we extend our heartfelt congratulations to Saena Penaia for his outstanding success



as a cocoa farmer, we also express our profound gratitude for his invaluable contributions to SUNGO and the broader agricultural community. Saena's journey serves as a shining example of what can be achieved through perseverance, dedication, and a steadfast commitment to one's craft. We are immensely proud to have him as a member of our community and eagerly anticipate witnessing his continued success and impact in the years to come. Through SUNGO, Saena has had the opportunity to participate in various training programs, each designed to equip him with the knowledge, skills, and encouragement needed to navigate the challenges of farming and entrepreneurship.

These trainings have served as invaluable resources, providing Saena with the tools and insights necessary to overcome obstacles, adapt to evolving industry trends, and seize new opportunities.

Join us in celebrating Saena Penaia's achievements and in wishing him continued prosperity and fulfilment in all his endeavours!



Successful Completion of Four-Day Training for SUNGO's Pool of Trainers



28 March 2024, SUNGO Office, Vaitele - This day marks the successful conclusion of a four-day training program conducted by SUNGO aimed at upskilling its pool of trainers on Applied Skills Training. The training, which commenced on Monday 25th April 2024, was facilitated by the esteemed Mr. Tavuga Vaai and saw the active participation of 14 dedicated individuals. The intensive training sessions focused on equipping SUNGO's trainers with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver the upcoming Good Governance program across 51 constituencies scheduled for June this year. Participants underwent rigorous instructions and practical exercises to enhance their training capabilities and ensure they are well-prepared to impart valuable knowledge to their respective communities. Lavea Peseta Lua Nafai, President of SUNGO, expressed his heartfelt appreciation to the participants for their unwavering commitment and passion throughout the training. He commended their dedication to completing the program and acknowledged the significant role they will play in advancing the organization's mission of promoting good governance and community development.



Furthermore, President Nafai extended gratitude to Mr. Tavuga Vaai for his exceptional facilitation of the training sessions, recognizing his hard work and expertise in guiding the participants towards success. As a token of recognition for their achievements, each participant was awarded a certificate upon completion of the training. These certificates symbolize their commitment to personal and professional growth and serve as a testament to their readiness to contribute meaningfully to SUNGO's initiatives. The successful completion of this training program underscores

SUNGO's commitment to building capacity within its mandate in ensuring the delivery of high-quality programs for the benefit of the communities it serves.