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SUNGO NEWSLETTER

Strengthening Grassroots Development: Samoa and Japan Celebrate Signing Ceremony for SUNGO Training Centre



Tuesday, 7th January 2025, SNPF Plaza, Apia. - In a landmark moment for community development in Samoa, the Government of Japan and the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO) officially signed an agreement to launch the construction of a new training centre under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects (GGP).

The signing ceremony, held on January 7, 2025, was attended by H.E. Mr. SUZUKI Ryotaro, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Samoa, and Afioga Fuimaono Vaitolo Ofoia, CEO of SUNGO. The agreement formalizes Japan's commitment to provide a grant of **USD 137,222 (approximately SAT 367,755)** to fund the construction of a purpose-built training facility in Vaitele-Tai village.

This infrastructure is designed to serve as a vital hub for capacity building, empowering **over 230 NGOs and community stakeholders** across Samoa. The centre is expected to host **approximately 50 training sessions annually**, each accommodating **30 to 60 participants**.

By equipping participants with practical skills and knowledge, the centre aims to strengthen the resilience

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and effectiveness of grassroots organizations, enabling them to better serve their communities.

This initiative underscores Japan's enduring commitment to Samoa's socio-economic development. Through the GGP, Japan continues to support small-scale, high-impact projects that directly benefit local communities. The signing ceremony not only marks the beginning of a transformative project but also reaffirms the strong bilateral ties between Japan and Samoa. As Samoa moves forward in its development journey, partnerships like this serve as a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through collaboration, vision, and shared values.



SUNGO Team Retreat 2025; Strengthening Unity & Vision



7th – 8th February, 2025, **SUNGO Office, Vaitele Tai** - The Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO) proudly hosted its **2025 Executive Council, Reserves, Management & Staff Retreat** at our Vaitele Tai office. This two-day gathering brought together key members of our organization for a dynamic and purpose-driven experience.

The retreat served as a powerful platform for reflection, collaboration, and strategic planning. With a shared commitment to SUNGO's mission, participants engaged in meaningful dialogue, team-building exercises, and forward-thinking sessions that laid the groundwork for our initiatives in 2025.

From aligning organizational goals to strengthening internal bonds, the retreat reaffirmed our dedica-

tion to community impact and collective growth. The energy, insights, and unity displayed throughout the event were truly inspiring.



A heartfelt thank you to all who took part and contributed to the success of this retreat. Your passion and teamwork continue to drive SUNGO forward.

Here's to a transformative year ahead-rooted in purpose, powered by people.

CAPACITY BUILDING

SUNGO's Managing Organizations Trainings Spark Momentum for Civil Society Organizations



3rd - 5th February 2025, **TATTE Building, Sogi** - SUNGO hosted its two Managing Organizations Training Courses separately on the same days for civil society organizations. With support from the Commonwealth Foundation, the training empowered local leaders to boost their organizational skills and community impact. The event wrapped up with a vibrant certificate presentation, celebrating participants' dedication and growth.

Grateful for the insights, connections, and renewed sense of purpose, attendees are now set to champion change across Samoa. *"This training has truly empowered us,"* shared one participant.



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SUNGO continues Launching Powerful Training for Civil Society Leaders



27th – 29th January, 2025, Millenia Hotel, Sogi - The Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO) proudly launched its Managing Organizations Training on the 27th - 29th January 2025 at the Millenia Hotel, Sogi.

With support from the Commonwealth Foundation, this initiative was designed to boost leadership and strengthen management skills for civil society organizations across Samoa.

Delivered by experienced SUNGO Community Train-

Managing Organizations Training Continue



ers, the sessions emphasized strategic planning, governance, and operational best practices - giving participants the confidence and tools to lead with impact.

"We're not just learning - we're transforming how we serve our communities," said one participant.

SUNGO remains committed to nurturing the growth and sustainability of NGOs in Samoa through capacity-building, advocacy, and support.

Good Governance Training Begins in Palauli Districts



10th - 12th February 2025, Savaii. - SUNGO launched its Good Governance Training

for the Districts of Palauli 1 and Palauli 2. Delivered by SUNGO Community Trainers, the course is part of ongoing efforts to enhance transparency, accountability, and leadership at the grassroots level.

Participants are engaging in practical sessions aimed at equipping village leaders and community representatives with the tools to foster ethical decision-making and inclusive development. This training supports SUNGO's vision of building resilient communities through empowered local governance.

Salega District Councils Complete Good Governance Training in Savaii



17th – 19th February 2025, Salelologa, SAVAII.

SUNGO successfully delivered its Good Governance Training for the District Councils of Salega 1 and Salega 2, hosted at the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSO) Office in Salelologa.

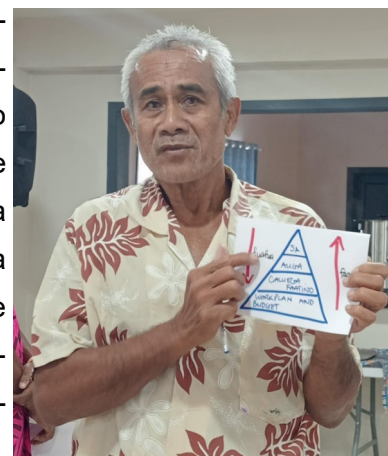
Over three dynamic days, council members immersed themselves in practical workshops covering transparency, accountability, leadership, and ethical decision-making. The sessions, facilitated



The training concluded with a certificate presentation celebrating the participants' achievements and commitment to community development. Each council member earned their recognition through dedication, teamwork, and a shared vision for better governance.

SUNGO extends heartfelt appreciation to all attendees, trainers, and supporters who helped make this initiative a success.

Salega districts have taken a confident step toward stronger, more responsive leadership - and we couldn't be prouder.



SUNGO Expands Good Governance Training Across Sagaga and Anoamaa Districts

3rd - 5th March 2025, SUNGO Office, Vaitele Tai



SUNGO continues to strengthen district leadership through its ongoing Good Governance Training initiative. The District Councils of Sagaga 3 and Sagaga 4 participated in targeted workshops focused on transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making.

The momentum carried through to the 10th - 12th of March where SUNGO hosted another 3-day training for the Anoamaa 1 and Anoamaa 2 constituencies at Tooa Salamasina Hall in Sogi.



Both sessions, facilitated by SUNGO Community Trainers, equipped council members with critical skills to better serve their communities. Each training concluded with a certificate presentation, recognizing participants' dedication to building resilient, well-governed local institutions.



SUNGO remains committed to empowering district councils with the tools and knowledge to lead effectively and uphold the values of good governance across Samoa.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

SUNGO Engages with German Consulate to Advance Civil Society



11 March 2025, SUNGO Office – The Chief Executive Officer of the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO), Afio-ga Fuimaono Vaitolo Ofoia, welcomed His Excellency, Afoa Stefan Szegedi, Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany to Samoa, for a diplomatic meeting held at the SUNGO Office.

Accompanied by a member of his delegation, His Excellency engaged in discussions centered on deepening the partnership between SUNGO and the Consulate. The meeting underscored a mutual commitment to enhancing civil society development and building resilient, sustainable collaborations in Samoa.



This strategic engagement reaffirms

SUNGO's dedication to fostering international cooperation in support of community empowerment and organizational growth across the region.

SUNGO and MWCSO Strengthen Commitment to Child Protection

19 March 2025 SUNGO Office, Vaitele Tai – In a joint effort to advance the National Child Care and Protection Policy (2020–2030), the Ministry of Women, Community, and Social Development convened a consultation with the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO).

The midterm review highlighted both parties' unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights, safety, and well-being of every child in Samoa.



By fostering collaboration and refining strategies, the consultation marks a step forward in creating a more secure, nurturing environment for future generations.

Together, SUNGO and MWCSO continue to pave the way for a brighter, safer future for our children.

KAS and USP Deliver Insightful Workshop in Samoa



24th – 25th February 2025, Tanoa Tusitala Hotel, Sogi – The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), in collaboration with the University of the South Pacific (USP), successfully hosted a dynamic workshop on Democracy and Political Parties in Samoa in terms of Challenges and Opportunities. Held at the Tanoa Tusitala Hotel, the event welcomed young professionals and students, including several SUNGO members, eager to deepen their understanding of Samoa's political landscape.

Designed to spark meaningful dialogue, the course offered thought-provoking insights into democratic systems and party politics, empowering the next generation of leaders.

KAS - well-known for previously bringing the Honorable David McAlister to Samoa for engagements with SUNGO - continues to play a pivotal role in promoting civic education and democratic development across the region.

tive Officer of the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO), Afioga Fuimaono Vaitolo Ofoia, convened a consultative meeting with representatives from the Pacific Labour Mobility Support Program (PLMSP).



The session focused on gathering valuable stakeholder perspectives to guide the development of a tailored support initiative under the broader Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme. Emphasizing community-driven solutions, Afioga Fuimaono discussed the program's anticipated benefits - ranging from economic upliftment to skills development - while also addressing potential implementation challenges.

This collaborative dialogue marks an important step toward designing responsive and inclusive strategies that reflect the needs and aspirations of Samoa's civil society organizations.

SUNGO Consults with PLMSP Team

24th February 2025, SUNGO Office, Vaitele Tai - In a proactive move toward enhancing labour mobility outcomes for Samoa, the Chief Execu-



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IOE Samoa Project

Advancing the IOE Samoa Project through Partnership and Community Voices



February - March 2025 - In a series of strategic engagements and consultative meetings, the Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organizations (SUNGO), alongside representatives from the European Union in the Pacific, International IDEA, and the IOE Samoa Project team, has taken bold steps to advance the ongoing *IOE Samoa Project*, focused on climate resilience and sustainable development.



The IOE Samoa Project 2025 journey began on the 6th February in *Leulumoega Tuai*, where project discussions laid the groundwork for collaborative action. By 12th February, the momentum continued with a meeting at the SUNGO Office, *Vaitele Tai*, featuring constructive dialogue on the updates and directions, and a site visit to *Malie* and *Fasitoo Uta* - two villages identified as vulnerable to climate change. The visit highlighted the in-

spiring resilience of these communities and the urgent need for tailored climate interventions.

Through the kind assistance of the European Union and International IDEA, SUNGO hosted the sixth of eight consultative meetings on the 27th – 28th February, fostering vital conversations at the village level on climate challenges and local solutions.

The work intensified on the 6th – 7th March, when SUNGO brought together community representatives from



Magiagi, Moataa Uta, Alaoa, Lelata, Maagao, and Faatoialemanu. Day one focused on flooding and infrastructure needs, while day two celebrated grassroots-led adaptation strategies and sustainable practices.

These events reaffirm SUNGO's dedication to empowering communities, shaping inclusive policies, and building a sustainable future for all Samoans.



A partnership between:



Initiative on Empowerment
of Civil Society in
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