

Credit Union Foundation Australia (CUFA)
Final Report for the Australian Government- Office of Women
Solomon Islands Young Women's Leadership Program (YWLP)

a) a report against the objectives and milestones (as outlined in the Milestones Plan)

Milestone 1- Establish a workshop working group

Project Officer Paula Jops established a working group for the YWLP, consisting of Mary Taupiri, Jocelyn Muga, Cathy Mesepitu, Peter Mason, Pauline Firisua and Trevor Davis. However Paula Jops ceased working at CUFA in September 2007, and Project Officer Claudine Chicheportiche began managing the Young Women's Leadership Program. It was decided that the working group should consist only of women, in order to maximise female participation in the project and within the communities involved.

Several of the women were unable to continue being part of the working group due to work commitments or for personal reasons. The working group became; 1. Mary Taupiri- Solomon Island Credit Union League (SICUL) 2. Caroline Kanoko, Assistant Branch Manager, Central Bank 3. Phyllis Maike- European Union, 4. Gwendolyn Pita- Sasamunga Village Leader 5. Jenny Anisi- Auki Mothers Union Leader 6. Claudine Chicheportiche, CUFA Project Officer

Many other Solomon Island women's groups, female leaders, nurses, teachers, and local village women were consulted in the planning, preparation and execution of the YWLP. Some of the dozens of women consulted include; Ruth Liloqula – Secretary Cabinet (first female Secretary Cabinet in the Solomon Islands), Dr. Alice Pollard- Rokotanikeni Women's Association, Ms.Ethel Suri- Mothers Union Provincial President, Nellie Hano- Women's Health Presenter, Ministry of Health, Lisa Horiwapu- Vois Blong Mere (Women's Voice) Radio Station Programs Officer, Flori Vengo- Women's Coordinator of six villages in Choiseul, Florence Ngava- Sasamunga Women's Leader and school teacher, and Isabel's first female Village Chief, Annie Jolo.

Over 25 women from the Australian credit union movement were also consulted and invited to participate in the Young Women's Leadership Program Working Group.

Milestone 2- Set criteria for potential participants

Criteria for participants were established and clearly communicated to each of the YWLP coordinators, who were in charge of organising the participants for each island and included;

- **Young Leaders;**

Must be aged 18 – 26 yrs. Must commit to full 3 days of the workshop. Preferred to have a link to the credit union movement but not compulsory. Must work with a female mentor throughout workshop. Must develop a project during the workshop. Must be responsible for executing and completing her project once the Young Women's Leadership program is finished.

- **Female Mentors;**

Must be aged 27 yrs and older. Expected to be mature women who are respected in the community. Mentors must work with at least one younger woman, aged 18 – 26 yrs for the 3 day workshop. Mentors must guide and encourage the younger woman throughout the program and assist her to complete her project if she requires it.

Milestone 3- Logistics of workshop

A planning visit was held during January 2008, where the project officer organised the program logistics for each of the 4 workshops. The workshop locations were confirmed at Honiara, Buala, Auki and Sasamunga. Program coordinators were selected at each island who would oversee the overall planning of these logistics.

Milestone 4- Create Topic Matrix

3 Topics selected for the workshops were Financial Literacy, Health and Hygiene, and Confidence and Self Esteem. Although the teaching may have varied slightly at each workshop the following format and teaching methodology were predominantly used;

Topic and Presenters	Content Breakdown	Teaching Methodology
Welcome and Introduction	Welcome participants Clarify the purpose of the YWLP Establishing the roles of the mentors and young leaders Selecting a mentor	-Workshop organiser welcomed participants and explained that the key objective for the workshop was to empower women, and especially young women, through greater involvement in financial matters and through greater community involvement. - The role of mentors was established and made clear to all participants eg support the younger women, guide them, listen to them, encourage the younger women, motivate them to take action etc - The role of Young Leaders was established eg participate, talk and ask questions, be very active throughout the program etc. - Young Leaders each selected a Mentor to work with for the program
	Mentors and Young Women relationship building	- Young Leaders and Mentors spent 10 mins getting to know one another, telling their names, cultural background/ islands that they come from, talking about their families, etc.
	Icebreaking game- Balloon race	Participants made teams of 15, lined up behind one another- young leader, mentor, young leader etc. Each team blew up a balloon then passed it to the person behind, alternating over their head, then under their legs, until the balloon was at the end of the line. It was a loud and hilarious way of getting participants to relax and open up.
Financial Literacy Honiara Caroline Kanoko- Assistant Branch Manager, Central Bank of Solomon Islands	Income What is income?	Lecture & open Q&A
	Spending What is spending?	Lecture & open Q&A
	What do you currently spend your money on?	Participants write a list of what they spent their money on within the last few days, to evaluate how they spend their money

Financial Literacy Buala, Auki, Sasamunga Claudine Chicheportiche	Defining needs and wants - what are they?	Lecture & open Q&A
	Do you spend your money on needs or wants? What areas of your current spending is on wants? Eg Spending money on betel nut	Participants mark 'need' or 'want' next to each item on their list of recent spending (Results commonly found that young women are spending money on wants such as betel nut, phone cards, nail polish etc, all except the young women in Choiseul)
	Savings What is savings? Why should you save?	Lecture & open Q&A
	What are some reasons why you should save?	Lecture & open Q&A
	How can you financially prepare for your future/ for your children's education/ for an emergency etc?	Q&A
	Financial Goals What is a goal? What are small savings goal examples? What are big savings goal examples?	Lecture & open Q&A
	Setting a savings goal.	Group exercise- mentors and young leaders worked in groups of approx. 10 and set a savings goal each, with a plan of how and when they would achieve that goal. Each participant then presented their goal to all participants. <i>(Goal setting was a totally unheard of task by almost every participant, and it was the first time most participants had ever spoken in front of a crowd. This was very empowering for the women and especially the young women, who were encouraged to set goals and present their goals with confidence. The mentors were very supportive.</i>
	Where to save? Where can you save your money?	Lecture & open Q&A
	Do you save your money already? Where do you currently save your money? What are some examples of where you are putting your savings in a safe place?	Q&A
	What is a credit union? What is a savings club? Are there any credit unions or savings clubs in your village or nearby?	Lecture & open Q&A Participants who are members of credit unions and savings banks shared their stories about them, how they save, how they benefit etc
Question time	A question box was placed at the back of the hall and before the end of each day questions from the box were answered by presenters.	

Health and Hygiene Honiara Nellie Hano- Ministry of Health, Women's Health Presenter Buala Chrisma Happy and Nylyn Trasel, Assistant Health Promotion Officers Buala Hospital Auki Marylyn Iro, Women's Reproductive Health Presenter and HIV/AIDS Coordinator Sasamunga Elisha Majaka- Nurse Aid, Sasamunga Hospital Annie Miavana- Registered Nurse, Sasamunga Hospital, Gretal Mepa- Nurse Aid, Sasamunga Hospital	What is healthy living? Healthy living is more than the absence of illness. Healthy living means; - Healthy/ clean body - Healthy/clean home - Healthy/clean village	Lecture, and Q&A
	Healthy Body - Nutrition - Eating for motherhood - Feeding your family	Lecture, and Q&A
	Preventing Sickness - How to stop germs spreading - Personal hygiene- how to be hygienic - Food preparation	Lecture, and Q&A
	Women's Health- Knowing your Body Women's and men's reproductive systems	Lecture- using flip charts or diagrams Q&A
	Sexually transmitted Infections (STI's)	Lecture, and Q&A
	HIV/ Aids education	Lecture, and Q&A
	Teenage pregnancy	Lecture, and Q&A
	Family planning	Lecture, and Q&A
	Women's Health issues and communication	Group discussion and presentation- what should a young girl/ woman do if; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a young girl thinks she is pregnant and is not married? 2. how should a mother treat her daughter if she falls pregnant and is not married? 3. what should a young girl or mother do if she thinks she has an STI? 4. how can you plan for a family?
	Sanitation and your environment- How can you keep your house and garden clean?	Lecture, and Q&A
	Sanitation and your environment- keeping your village clean. What are ways of keeping your village clean? What toilets are used in your community? How can you keep these toilets safe for women and clean for the whole community?	Lecture, and Q&A
	You and Your Health- summary	Goal setting- participants set a Health Goal for their body/ home/ village, deciding on a new action that they will take to improve their personal health, or improve the sanitation of their home or village environment.

	Question time	If participants were too shy to ask in front of the workshop group, questions were placed in the Question box and were answered before the end of the program each day.
Confidence and Self Esteem	What is Confidence? Where does confidence come from?	Lecture, and Q&A
Honiara Ruth Maetala- European Union	Who are you? Where do you see yourself? What is your role in your community?	Participants were asked to think about this person "You". Exercise- draw a picture or write about how you see yourself and where you fit into your community.
Buala Ruth Vilia, Women's Desk Officer, and Claudine Chicheportiche	You are somebody. Why every woman is important.	Participants had to stand up if they are a mother, a friend, a sister, a daughter, a teacher, a nurse, etc demonstrating that they are all important and helpful to others. With everyone standing up, it was recognised that every young woman, and every mentor was important and played an important role in the community in some way.
Auki Ruth Maetala- European Union, Claudine Chicheportiche		
Sasamunga Claudine Chicheportiche	Self –talk How does a woman with low self-esteem talk to herself? How does she think about herself?	Q&A Participants nominated how a woman with no self-esteem thinks eg. I am hopeless, I am stupid, I am uneducated, I am poor etc
	How can a woman think confidently about herself?	Q&A Women had to give examples of how a happy, confident person would think about herself.
	Stopping low self-esteem and building confidence	Several participants were selected to tear up the paper with the negative comments on it, to demonstrate they must stop thinking negatively about themselves.
	Examples of how women can be confident	Lecture Q&A

<p>Breaking free from your past</p>	<p>Story-telling Domestic Violence Presenter Ruth Maetala shared her inspirational personal story about how she dealt with male dominance and domestic violence, explaining how she overcame the violence and her fears to become the highly educated, active woman and role model she is today. Claudine Chicheportiche shared her personal story about coming from a 'broken home' (many Solomon Island women see this as the end of their lives if they are not supported by their family), having no home or no family support at the age of 16, but how this experience of an independent upbringing enriched her life and shaped her optimistic, never- give up attitude.</p>
<p>Women and Leadership What are the qualities of a good leader?</p>	<p>Open Q&A</p>
<p>What role do women have in leadership?</p>	<p>Open Q&A</p>
<p>What sort of women are leaders?</p>	<p>Open Q&A</p>
<p>How many leaders are currently attending the workshop? How are you influencing the other women in your community?</p>	<p>Women who recognised themselves as leaders raised their hand. Women were asked to raise their hand if; they are a mother, they are a teacher, they participate in a community group etc Therefore, they are a leader and a role model of sorts, they are responsible for shaping the lives of others. Participants recognised they themselves are leaders.</p>
<p>Building relationships amongst women- how can women support each other? How can mothers bring up their daughters to be leaders? How can mothers bring up their daughters to have confidence? How can young women be more active in society? How can young women have confidence?</p>	<p>Confidence Exercise- Role Play or Song Participants worked in groups comprising of young leaders and mentors, to develop a drama or write a song, outlining how they can become confident, how women can support each other, or how mothers can teach their children to be confident. The song or drama was performed for all participants. It was a powerful and enriching experience that actively demonstrated the women were grasping new, positive principles about the role of women and boosted their confidence dramatically.</p>

	Yes, yes, yes I can, yes I can do it.	Presenter taught a hand clapping exercise, and sang the words “Yes, yes, yes I can, yes I can do it.” This was repeated louder and louder by the empowered participants. (Participants were often heard singing repeating this song during breakfast, or late at night, well after the program was over). In Sasamunga, it was translated into local language; “O, o, o rako majala, O ra ma jojini.”
	Question time	Participant questions were written down and placed in the Question box, and answered at the end of the program.
Claudine Chicheportiche	Self defense class A self defense class was offered as an option to participants at the first workshop in Honiara. The response was so positive that it was offered at all other workshops. Claudine is an experienced martial artist with 12 years of martial art training, and has won a number of competitions including 2 world karate titles and 7 Australian Championships.	30 mins- 45 mins karate class, which accommodated for all participants regardless of age or fitness level. An informal part of the workshop, participants jumped at the opportunity to learn simple exercises and self defence techniques. This was a fun, safe and teambuilding way for the women to engage in a new activity together and increase their confidence.

Milestone 5- Determine Content/ Topic summary

During the January planning visit, the topics and program content for each workshop were discussed in great detail with village chiefs, YWLP working group, female community leaders, nurses, teachers, and local village women. Women from each island were consulted in selecting the program content for their workshop, so that the program content suited the specific needs of the women and the particular community circumstances.

Organisations and community members consulted with regards to program content for the workshops included;

Honiara, Guadalcanal

Dr. Alice Pollard, Rokotanikeni Women’s Association
Ruth Liloqula, Cabinet Secretary
Caroline Kanoko, Central Bank of Solomon Islands
Honiara City Council, Nursing Division
Training Officer, Moses Karuni
Ministry of Health, Honiara
Ethel Suri- Provincial President of Mothers Union and SICA (Solomon Islands Christian Association)
Federation of Women
Cathy Messepitu, Accounts officer
Miltus Fomani, young female police officer
Vois Blong Mere- Women’s Voice radio station
Lisa Horiwapu- Vois Blong Mere
Olga Chapangi- Vois Blong Mere
Ian Andrew, Sinta Credit Union Accountant
Phyllis Maike- European Union

Buala, Isabel

Chief Lionel, Buala Village Chief
Annie Jolo, Women's Chief (first woman to become a chief on the island)
Hugo Maemana, Kasakow Credit Union Treasurer
Dr. Donald Kafa, Buala Hospital, Doctor (the sole doctor in Buala)
Melinda Vasula- Diocese Resthouse Staff
Kasako Credit Union
Ruth Vilia, Women's Desk Officer
Titus Vito, Buala Savings Clubs/ Credit Union
Doreen Ata, Mothers Union Leader, Buala
Dorothy Bana- village woman

Auki, Malaita

David Maefuna, Killasakwalo Microfinance Rural Resource Centre Coordinator (MRRC)
Monica Wale, Kiluufi Hospital Nurse
Martha Rurai, Mothers Union Coordinator
Mothers Union head coordinators meeting, approx 20 attending, including;
Jenny Anisi- Diocese Secretary of Mothers Union
Muriel Wale, Literature Secretary of Mothers Union
Marylyn Iro, Kiluufi Hospital, Reproductive Health Presenter and HIV/AIDS Coordinator
Dr. Rex Maukera, Kiluufi Hospital Director
Clara Rikimani- Women's Development Desk Officer
John Sala, Busurata MMRRRC Coordinator
Mary Ramoe- Busurata MRRC Chair, and Buurata Primary School teacher

Sasamunga, Choiseul

Damaris Zesapa- Moli High School Teacher
Flori Vengo- Community Leader of 6 villages, from Papara to Sasamunga
Nikola Pitakaka- Coordinator of Sasamunga Communal Women's Organisation
Gwendolyn Pita- Community Programs Coordinator
Florence Ngava- Sasamunga Community Leader and Sasamunga High School Teacher
Jessie Sako- Sasamunga Community Coordinator
Amos Kube- Superintendent Minister Babatana Circuit
Nerolyn Alakalia- General Manger Sasamunga Hospital
Sasamunga Hospital Staff- Stanley- Registered nurse, Nixon- laboratory test manager, Jopsephine- Nurses Aid, Elisha- Nurses Aid, James- Pharmacist

Milestone 6- Request for content submission

During the planning visit, permission regarding content was confirmed and permission was granted by all consulted individuals and parties. Permission was verbally granted by community leaders or Young Women Leadership Program coordinators.

Honiara was the most liberal in terms of approving program permission and content was confirmed by Ruth Liloqula, Cabinet Secretary, Caroline Kanoko, Central Bank, and the Ministry of Health. Village Chiefs Chief Lionel and Annie Jolo approved program content in Buala. Jenny Anisi and Marylyn Iro approved program content in Auki, whilst Sasamunga program content was firstly approved by Superintendent Minister Amos Kube, but then had to be further approved by the 5 YWLP workshop committee members; (Marama) Flori Vengo, Nikola Pitakaka, Gwendolyn Pita, Florence Ngava, and Jessie Sako.

Milestone 7- Approve participants

Program Coordinators were established at each island who selected 50 young women and 50 mentors to attend the YWLP workshop. Coordinators ensured participants met the required criteria and came from an even spread of villages. It was important that women were represented from both central villages and more urban villages, so that the program could reach into more remote areas. It was also communicated, through the project officer or by the local program coordinators, that the role of the remote participants was to communicate the learnings of the YWLP back to the women in their villages.

Program coordinators also had to ensure that participants came from a variety of church backgrounds, to ensure no religious group was favoured in the selection process of participants. In the Solomon Islands, it is uncommon for religious groups to work together, and do not readily mix.

It was made clear to program coordinators selecting participants, that no discrimination against any church would be tolerated, and that all women regardless of religious background should be welcomed to attend the workshops. The coordinators were successful in this area and women from a variety of religious backgrounds did attend the workshops.

Milestone 8- Research Venue Options/ Book Venue

The venues were selected and booked at St Barnabas Hall in Honiara, Jejevo Conference Hall in Buala, Rarasu Restaurant in Auki and the Women's Meeting Hall in Sasamunga. Key points for consideration included having enough space for 100 participants and ensuring a natural setting so that village women were not intimidated by the environment of a formal space.

Milestone 9- Research and Book Speakers

During the January planning visit, local presenters were sourced for each workshop from each island. Health and Hygiene presenters, working at the local hospital or health clinics were confirmed. However even confirmed presenters cancelled at the 11th hour, due to work or family commitments. At first this seemed like a big challenge but it never became a problem as the project officer simply presented these sessions. Fortunately, during the planning visit, the women confirmed that the project officer was expected to teach at the workshops, and it would appear that she was above the participants if she did not teach. They welcomed new knowledge and information that came from another country.

The final presenters were as follows;

Honiara

Financial Literacy- Caroline Kanoko- Central Bank of Solomon Islands
Health and Hygiene- Nellie Hano- Ministry of Health, Women's Health Presenter
Confidence- Ruth Maetala- European Union

Buala

Financial Literacy- Claudine Chicheportiche, CUFA
Health and Hygiene- Chrisma Happy and Nylyn Trasel, Assistant Health Promotion Officers Buala Hospital, Buala Hospital, and Patricia Simata- Reproductive Health Officer
Confidence- Ruth Vilia- Women's Desk Officer, Claudine Chicheportiche, CUFA

Auki

Financial Literacy- Claudine Chicheportiche, CUFA
Health and Hygiene- Marylyn Iro, Women's Reproductive Health Presenter
Confidence- Ruth Maetala- European Union, Claudine Chicheportiche, CUFA

Sasamunga-

Financial Literacy- Claudine Chicheportiche, CUFA
Health and Hygiene- Elisha Majaka- Nurse Aid, Sasamunga Hospital, Annie Miavana- Registered Nurse, Sasamunga Hospital, and Gretal Mepa- Nurse Aid, Sasamunga Hospital
Confidence- Claudine Chicheportiche, CUFA

Milestone 10- Send invitations

Mary Taupiri and SICUL General Manager, Andrew Manepora'a, sent out invitations to all Solomon Island credit unions and advertised the workshops in their newsletter. Invitations for Young Women and Mentors to attend the workshops were advertised on 'Vois Blong Mere' (Women's Voice) radio station and Mary Taupiri was also interviewed about the workshop (a copy of this interview can be found in the appendix of this report). In Buala, Village Chief Lionel broadcast on local radio to invite participants from Buala and nearby villages, as well as delivering hand written letters. In Sasamunga, invitations were also made verbally or by handwritten letters. This was the best technique of inviting participants in and around Sasamunga, who do not have communication resources like newspapers, email, or telephones.

Milestone 11- Confirmation of bookings from participants and Coordinators

Participant lists (50 Young Leaders and 50 Mentors) were prepared by Workshop Coordinators at each island and submitted to Mary Taupiri at SICUL, then forwarded on to the project officer.

It is very difficult to get Solomon Islanders to commit to something, and the Young Women's Leadership Program was no exception. Whilst the majority of participants came, another 20 participants would not turn up. The lesson was quickly learnt in Honiara. A list of the participants who were not in attendance was read out and participants present were asked if they knew anyone on that list, to get them to attend the following day. Participants present were also asked to invite their female family members and friends to attend the workshop the next day, with an emphasis of bringing as many young women as possible to the program. The tactic worked and attendance escalated from 76 on day 1, to 100 women on days 2 and 3.

For the remaining 3 workshops, YWLP committee organisers were told to ask more women to attend the workshop (again with a focus on the younger women) so that it was oversubscribed. Sure enough, some women who were on the list did not turn up, however there were replacements who took their place. There was always enough room for the participants in the hall, always enough educational literature (booklets and posters) to go around, and always enough food provided for every participant.

Milestone 12- Accommodation/ travel arranged for participants

In Honiara, all participants met their own travel and accommodation expenses to attend the workshop, whilst accommodation and transport was organised and paid for, for remote participants attending the remaining 3 workshops.

In Buala, boat transportation was arranged for 26 of the remote participants and accommodation was organised for them at Buala Kindergarten Hall.

In Auki, bus and truck transportation was arranged for participants who travelled from remote areas. 9 remote participants were accommodated at South Sea Evangelical Church guesthouse, 7 remote participants were accommodated a local participant's house, and 2 participants were accommodated at the local program coordinators' house.

In Sasamunga, 40 remote participants attended the workshop and were transported by to the program by boat. Participants came from villages from as far as Zarepe to Papara. 30 of these participants were accommodated at the Sister Lucy accommodation house. 10 participants were accommodated in the Women's Meeting Hall.

Milestone 13- Accommodation/ travel arranged for coordinators and speakers

All necessary travel and accommodation was arranged for program coordinators and speakers. Travel arrangements were always booked weeks in advance but paid for as late as possible and only once the project officer was 100% sure that the presenter/ program organiser was available and would attend the next workshop.

Milestone 14- Monthly meeting among working group

Due to work commitments and travel difficulties in the Solomon Islands it was extremely difficult to get all working group members together for a monthly meeting. Limited email or telephone communications access re-enforced this challenge. Monthly working group meetings were primarily communicated through head working group member organiser, Mary Taupiri. The CUFA project officer also communicated with the working group individually, which was easier for the working group as a whole.

Milestone 15- Monthly progress reports sent to CUFA and its partners

Mary Taupiri sent reports to CUFA, often on a weekly basis. This information was consistently extended and shared amongst CUFA's partners involved in the Young Women's Leadership Program. Teleconferences and meetings were held monthly (from December 2007 – April 2008) and phone calls and emails were sent almost daily, between the project officer, and YWLP program volunteers Judy Chang and Danielle Spinks.

Twice weekly, from December 2007 – April 2008, CUFA intern Judy Chang, came to the CUFA offices and met with the project officer to discuss the progress and findings of the working group. Judy's role was to research women in the Solomon Islands and then to develop the program content for the educational material. Danielle Spinks, Berrimah District Credit Union Marketing Assistant (who designed the educational material for the YWLP) was also in consistent communication with the project officer through emails and phone calls. Danielle learnt about the educational needs of the Solomon women and how to best communicate this through simple, culturally appropriate pictures combined with simple language.

Bi-monthly emails were also sent out to dozens of women from the Australian credit union movement. Originally the purpose was to invite the women to participate in the working group, but due to their lack of knowledge and experience with women in the south pacific, the emails became more of an update to inform how the YWLP was shaping up.

The women become extremely interested in the project after the planning visit email was corresponded and their interest in women's issues in the Solomons dramatically increased. At an International Women's Day event, Revive Social Club at Cuscal, in conjunction with CUFA, held a special Morning Tea for the women of Sasamunga and raised money for them after learning that they lost all their possessions (houses, schools, medical supplies etc) in a tsunami in April 2007. \$850.00 was raised and is being used for women's micro-finance business in Sasamunga. The working group feedback from Mary Taupiri, combined with the planning visit experience, became an important form of communication and link between Solomon Island women and the women of the Australian credit union movement.

Milestone 16-Receive Presentations and create a layout binder

Telecommunications in the Solomon Islands are often extremely limited or non-existent, especially in the remote areas where there is no electricity, no telephones, and no email. Consequently, workshop presentation material had to be confirmed by the project officer and the presenter at each island in person, prior to the workshop being run.

Milestone 17- Create Skeleton Agenda

Skeleton agenda was organised through the working group communications and further developed during the project officer's planning visit in January.

Milestone 18- Monthly meetings among working group

As previously stated it was very difficult to get working group members together for group meetings. Teleconferences were organised and held in November and December 2007, however working group members could not always attend due to work commitments, problems with transportation or family matters. It became increasingly obvious that the best tactic was to channel communications through Mary Taupiri, who was always reliable, efficient and an excellent communicator and organiser.

Almost daily between December 2007 – May 2008, Mary emailed, telephoned, personally visited, or used a 2-way radio (to the very remote areas) to communicate with working group members Cathy Messepitu, Phyllis Maike, Alice Pollard, Jenny Anisi, Gwendolyn Pita, and Caroline Kanoko to discuss the planning of the YWLP and to further the progress of its organisation.

Milestone 19- Monthly progress reports sent to CUFA and its partners

Mary Taupiri sent reports to the CUFA project officer weekly. Reports were predominantly sent by email although sometimes reports were communicated via telephone. Progress reports contained information regarding; presenter requests, confirmation of presenters availability; progress reports on participant numbers at each island; venue confirmation; research on catering groups and catering quotes; printing costs for educational booklet material; YWLP radio interviews; updates on workshop marketing and promotion etc.

The project officer passed the relevant information on to the Australian working group and to those who were actively engaged in organising the workshop from Australia eg Danielle Spinks, Judy Chang, Alison Clayton, from Cuscal, who researched printing costs for educational material, and Nadia De Lafoix and Elizabeth Phillips, also from Cuscal, who both researched freight and shipping companies to send the workshop materials.

Milestone 20- Print out workshop handouts and binders

CUFA intern Judy Chang assisted with the research for the workshop handouts, which were designed by a Danielle Spinks. An in-kind donation for printing of the handout material was made by the BT&S department of Cuscal, who thoroughly supported the Solomon Islands Young Women's Leadership Program. Prior to printing, the posters and booklets were sent to the Solomon Island working group for approval and were highly commended by the working group for their excellent content and simplistic layout, which could be 'read' and understood even by illiterate participants. Participants also commended the educational material, citing the booklets were highly educational and easy to understand, and were delighted to receive the posters which they regarded as inspirational and empowering. Copies of the booklets and posters used at the workshops are included in this report's appendix.

Milestone 21- Create evaluation to be given to participants at the workshop

An evaluation form was drafted and confirmed as appropriate for use by the head of the Solomon Islands working group. Participants were given time at the end of the workshop to complete the evaluation, and the forms were usually filled in by participants who worked together, in an independent environment. Illiterate women who could not read or write their own evaluation, were read the questions by another participant. The questions were answered verbally and then recorded by a participant, who was able to write the answers down on their behalf.

Milestone 22- Confirm setup and layout of venue

The layout of each venue was organised and set up appropriately- butchers paper put up at the front of the hall, with a table for the presenter. There was a large space available near the front for floor mats, and theatre style chairs arranged for participants towards the back of the hall. A natural setting was consistently achieved, creating a comfortable environment for all participants. Colourful, comfortable floor mats were always supplied and were welcomed by participants who are generally accustomed to sitting on the floor.

Milestone 23- Welcome participants and oversee workshop 1, 2, 3 and 4

The four, 3 day workshops were successfully run in all 4 islands, and participants were welcomed in abundance at each venue, with an average of over 100 participants attending each workshop.

Each morning at the start of the workshops, participants had to register and receive their educational material for the day- a pencil, some paper, a financial literacy booklet, a health booklet, a 'Women Can Make and Save Money' poster, or a 'Women are Leaders- Women Can Do Anything' poster.

Morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea was served for the women in Honiara, Buala and Auki. Remote participants were also provided with breakfast and dinner, which was served in caterers' or program organiser's homes. In Sasamunga, the meals catered for were breakfast, lunch and dinner, and over 100 women dined together, eating with their hands, off large leaves for plates. When the meal was finished, the caterers wrapped up leftover food in the leaves and threw them in the sea.

Singing and prayer was common practise by all participants (indeed by all Solomon Islanders), and the workshops were opened and closed daily with multiple songs and harmonies. Similarly, in line with cultural practices, a prayer was said every morning before the workshop began and at the start of every meal.

Milestone 24- Facilitate creation of a management committee

A management committee was established at each of the 4 islands, consisting of the project officer, assistant program organiser/s, head working group member (at 2 of the 4 workshops), and local community leaders who had prepared and planned the workshops with the project officer and head working group member.

Milestone 25- Distribute evaluations and collect completed evaluations.

The evaluation forms were distributed at the end of each workshop and completed forms were collected at each island. Copies of these evaluations are in the appendix of this report.

Milestone 26- Review and Organise Evaluation Responses

Evaluation responses have been reviewed and organised, generating plans to implement further work within the Solomon Islands, to follow up the YWLP and to capitalise on progress already made. Through the contacts and relationships developed with the women and community groups, coupled with the financial literacy and confidence education that was achieved from the YWLP education, it is aspired that micro enterprising programs will take place, through the MRRC's.

Milestone 27- Monthly meeting of the working group

Ongoing communications are being sustained with the working group, the majority of communications being done through Mary Taupiri, and communicated back to the project officer. At this stage, working group communications are still on a weekly basis, if not more frequently.

Milestone 28- Workshop reports distributed to CUFA and its partners

Workshop reports are currently being drafted and will be distributed to CUFA's partners- supplied to the CUFA Board, uploaded onto the CUFA website, an article distributed in the CUFA newsletter, and a report emailed to the Australian YWLP working group.

Milestone 29- Monthly communication and updates between working group and workshop committees

Communications with the working group and workshop committees will continue, to maintain strong relationships between CUFA and the Solomon Islands, and to track the progress of the women who attended the workshop and confirm when their project is completed.

This communication will predominantly be maintained through Mary Taupiri, as she remains the key link to the working group and workshop committees in the Solomon Islands. Due to limited telecommunications and resources available to many of the workshop committees, it is simply too difficult to communicate via email or even telephone, to remote areas like Busurata in Auki, or even Buala in Isabel. However, Mary can use a 2-way radio to get messages through to these remote areas, or will pass messages to people who she knows are travelling to/ from that region.

Milestone 30- Distribute questionnaire # 2 to all workshop participants six- months post-workshop

Rather than distribute another questionnaire to workshop participants, program coordinators will monitor the participants' and their ongoing projects, then communicate progress to Mary Taupiri. It is hoped that further funding will be secured to CUFA, in order to arrange a follow up program to develop the outcomes already achieved by the YWLP, and to capitalise on the relationships previously established with the hundreds of women across the 4 islands. Ruth Maetla and/ or the project officer would conduct the progress visits and assess how the women are going with their projects.

Final evaluation of responses and final report distributed to all stakeholders

Final evaluation of responses is currently being distributed to all stakeholders.

a) Any highlights, breakthroughs or difficulties encountered

Highlights and breakthroughs include;

- The Young Leadership Program successfully empowered and educated 191 young female leaders and more than 200 female mentors across 4 islands, greatly surpassing the original program expectation of 40 young women and 40 mentors.
- Widely recognised amongst participants as the first workshop in the Solomon Islands to actively develop young female leaders within their communities.
- Repeatedly recognised by participants as groundbreaking and empowering women by teaching financial literacy, a previously unknown topic to the women
- Cited as the first workshop to engage in a mentoring relationship between older and younger community leaders. Opened communications and strengthened women's solidarity across communities, overcoming previous division of women's church groups, uniting the women, young and old, from all backgrounds.
- Successfully researched the needs of women (especially the needs of young women), specific to each island, and addressed these needs at each workshop.
- Created a genuine platform for young women to improve their self –esteem, their financial positioning, and increase their community involvement.
- Created employment for women at each venue, hiring local women to cater for the workshops. The caterers welcomed the opportunity for employment and were proud to cook for the 100 women participants whilst enjoying the financial benefits. Similarly, some local women were also employed to make floral arrangements that were displayed at the workshops.
- CUFA project officer learnt to speak Pidgin within a matter of weeks and presented the majority of her sessions at Auki and Sasamunga in Pidgin.
- The self-defence classes at the end of the workshops which were immensely enjoyed and embraced by all women.
- Being the first white woman to visit the small village of Gurena, Isabel province. After the Buala workshop, the project officer took a boat to a nearby village then hiked up a steep hill through the bush, for 2 hours with YWLP participant Anella Barodi and the 2 workshop assistants from CUFA, Sharon Papare and Josephine Haikau, The purpose was to visit the small savings club in Gurena and learn about how it benefited the community. Gurena is so remote and off the beaten track, the locals assured the project officer the last time any white man has travelled there was back in 1997 (to distribute seeds for agriculture) and she was actually the first white woman to ever make it there. Claudine spent the day in Gurena with YWLP participant Arella, her family, and the other remote participants from Gurena who also attended the Young Woman's Leadership program.

Difficulties encountered;

- Presenters and program organisers who gave extremely late notice about the cancellation of their participation, or other equally important factors.
- Poor telecommunications resources within the Solomon Islands and the difficulties involved with organising a workshop in areas with no telephones or email.
- Unreliable transport and infrastructure, not being able to depend on plane flights, or boats scheduled for departure to get to the next workshop in time.
- Expectation of some participants who believe they need funding to start their individual projects. Some participants had great difficulty in understanding, or could not understand, the purpose of their project was to demonstrate how you can start a project without requiring any initial outlay eg 1. start a savings plan or join a savings club, eg 2. trade seeds or flower cuttings with other women to increase produce in vegetable garden to grow and sell at markets etc.
- Limited funds, limited time, and so many women who want further assistance and further training.
- Lack of skilled and educated women in the Solomon Islands, who are to lead the women and to act as role models, and the dependent and inactive nature of the majority of young women across in the Solomon Islands, who are conditioned to being silent and disempowered.

- b) A general evaluation of the activity addressing;**
- **Whether the objectives stated in the funding agreement were met;**

The 4 workshops of the Young Women's Leadership Program met all of the objectives as stated in the funding agreement. The workshops successfully built women's capacity to take on greater leadership roles and responsibilities within their communities. This was achieved through the relationships developed between the mentors and the young leaders, combined with the empowering confidence sessions. The workshops successfully developed women's communication. The older women listened to the younger women and welcomed and encouraged their participation. Women's groups were brought together and previous divisions of age and religious background were dispelled. New, lasting relationships were formed and women designed ways of working together to benefit all. Representatives from existing community groups were heavily involved in the Young Women's Leadership Program and participated in all workshops.

Participants developed a project at the workshop that will translate into increased community involvement with the aim of generating financial gain. These capacity building projects will be ongoing and will add much value to the lives of the women and to their families.

Finally, a vast number of rural women attended the workshops, and were often given extra educational booklets and posters to take back to their villages to share with the women in their communities. The workshops successfully permeated to hundreds of women from remote and rural areas.

- **How the outcomes of the activity are being promoted and disseminated;**

The successful outcomes of the Young Women's Leadership Program are being promoted and distributed throughout the Australian and international credit union movement, through CUFA newsletters, industry magazines, and through the CUFA website. The CUFA project officer filmed the YWLP workshops and is making a documentary with the footage. A copy of the documentary will be supplied to the Office of Women when it is completed.

Solomon Islands television station, One News, filmed at the Honiara workshop and interviewed the project officer and head working group member. This was aired in the Solomon Islands at the time of the workshops. A copy of the news clip is being obtained and will be sent to the Office of Women when received. Vois Blong Mere (Women's Voice) radio station is scheduled to interview Mary Taupiri to report on the results and outcomes of the workshops and a copy will also be sent to the Office of Women upon receipt. SICUL has already distributed an article on the success of the YWLP in their newsletter, and a copy of this article is included in the appendix of this report.

Newspaper articles were printed in the Solomon Star and the Pacific Sun, and copies of these reports on the YWLP can be also found in this report's appendix.

- **How your organisation will ensure the outcomes are sustained beyond the Funding Agreement period;**

CUFA will ensure the outcomes achieved by the YWLP are sustained beyond the Funding Agreement period, by continuing to work with the working group and workshop coordinators in the Solomon Islands, following up on the participant projects. It is also hoped that further funding will be secured by CUFA, to conduct follow up visits to each of the 4 islands where the initial workshops were held. This would allow for further feedback from the women and to monitor the women's progress and their projects, and to issue a certificate to the women if their project has been completed.

CUFA's Executive Officer has also discussed the prospect of contracting Solomon Islander Ruth Maetala, to conduct a micro-finance business training program which would be piloted in some of the areas that the YWLP was held, and potentially extended to other areas once the pilot program proved successful. Discussions are currently being held with donors to look at further funding options.

- **What the key learnings are for your organisation;**

- Digesting a concept and learning in the Solomon Islands takes a long time. Even seemingly simple information and concepts that seem very easy to grasp will generally take a Solomon Islander a long time to understand. The women get confused if you teach too quickly and it was consistently remarked that more time was needed to adequately address these 3 subjects in the workshops. Future programs should cover fewer subjects and take longer to execute.

- More follow up is needed with the women in the Solomon Islands, to ensure that they act on what they have learnt. Ideally, women need hands-on training to show them how to do something.

Verbally discussing something also works effectively, but the women find it extremely difficult to make the link between thinking about something intellectually and then actively doing it.

- Women's leadership in the Solomon Islands is very rare, and especially young female leadership, so it is extremely important to continue to develop young female leaders in the Solomons.
- Planning in the Solomon Islands is never guaranteed, and seemingly confirmed events- such as transportation times or presenters who have committed to the project, can change within a moments notice.
- Translations during the workshops take time. In the more remote areas, workshops had to be conducted in 3 languages- English, Pidgin and the local language of the island.

- **The number of participants involved in the activity.**

There were a total of **413 women** who attended the Young Women's Leadership Program. Please see table below for full breakdown.

Location	Workshop Dates	No. of Young Female Leader participants	No. of Female Mentor participants	Total participants
Honiara	15, 16 17 April	42	58	100
Buala	22, 23 24 April	54	52	106
Auki	29, 30 April, 1 May	44	52	96
Sasamunga	6, 7, 8 May	51	67	118