

Rural Networking in Solomon Islands

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Country Facts and Constraints

Solomon Islands



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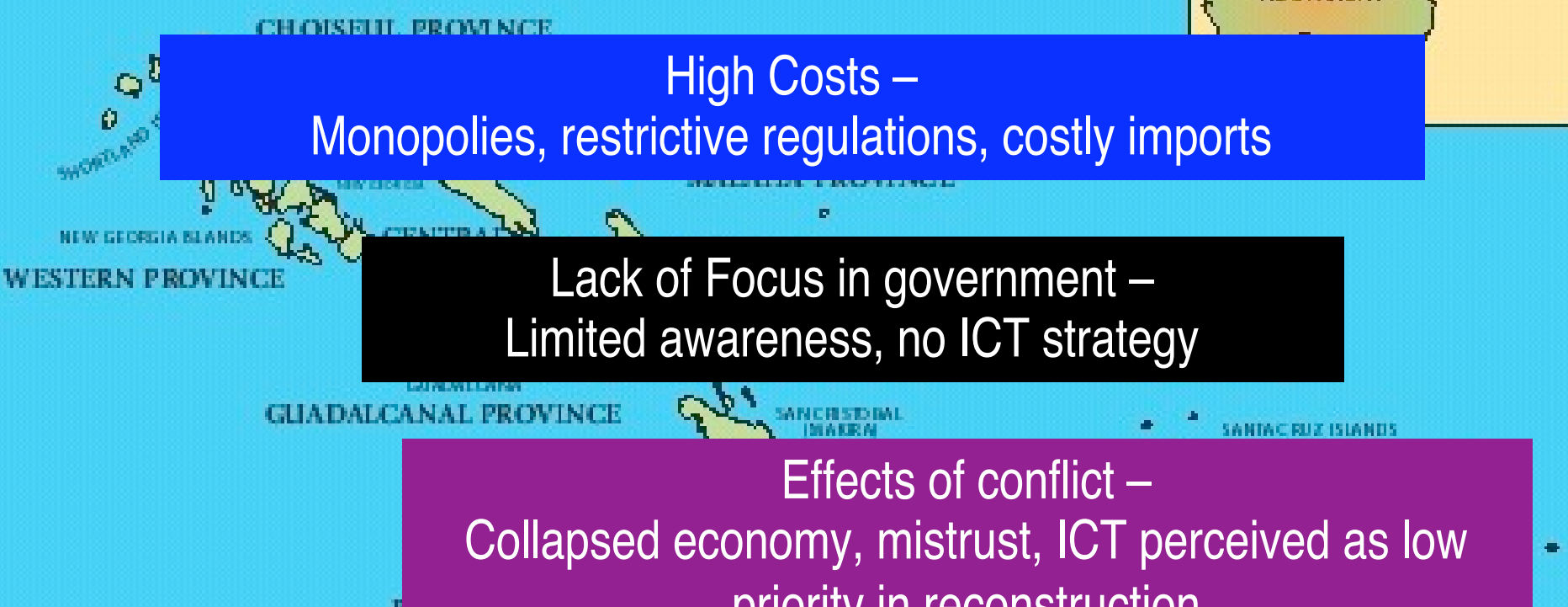
Solomon Islands

Small Island Geography –
100s of remote, scattered communities

High Costs –
Monopolies, restrictive regulations, costly imports

Lack of Focus in government –
Limited awareness, no ICT strategy

Effects of conflict –
Collapsed economy, mistrust, ICT perceived as low
priority in reconstruction



The People First Network (PFnet)

.....to promote and facilitate equitable and sustainable rural development and peace building by enabling better information sharing and knowledge building among and across communities forming the Solomon Islands.....

Rural Development Volunteers
Association (RDVA)



www.peoplefirst.net.sb

Objectives



1. Facilitate
affordable access

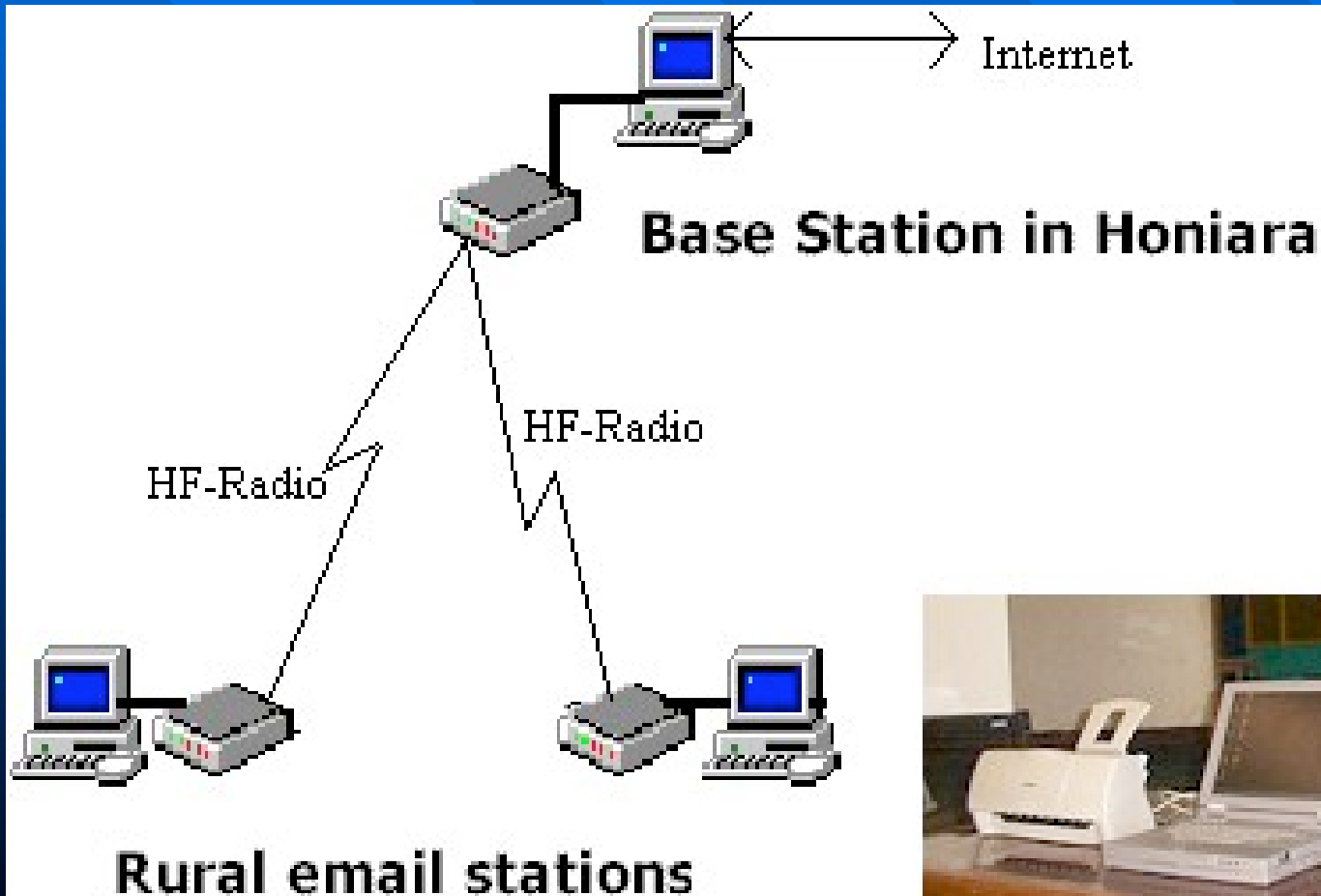


2. Facilitate rural development and peace-related information flows among all social groups;

3. Facilitate the exchange of information between communities and stakeholders;



Rural wireless networking in HF band





Management Committees

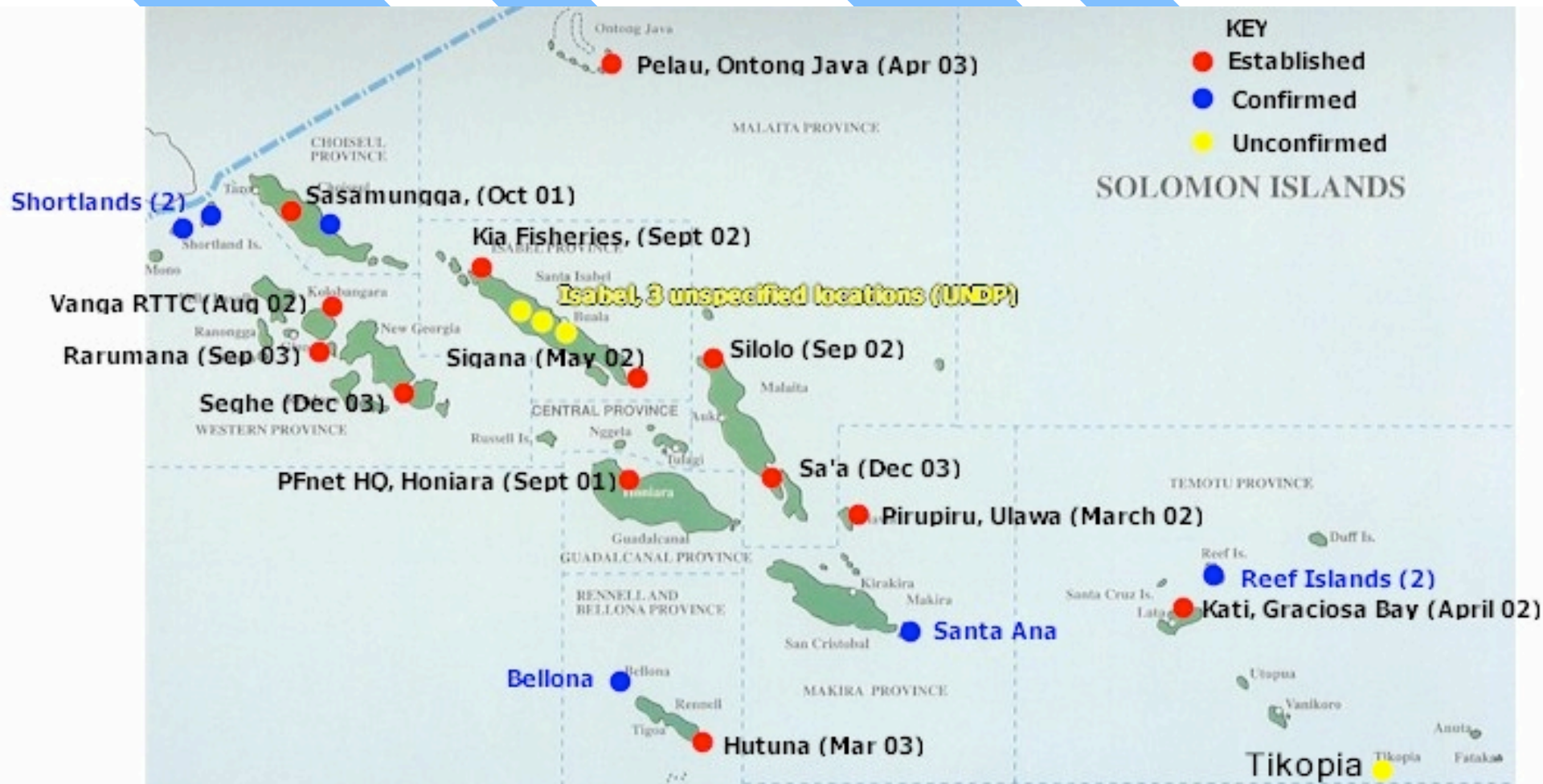
Community intermediaries

Technical intermediaries

Operators



12 stations with another 12
scheduled by June 2004



Applications




Distance education



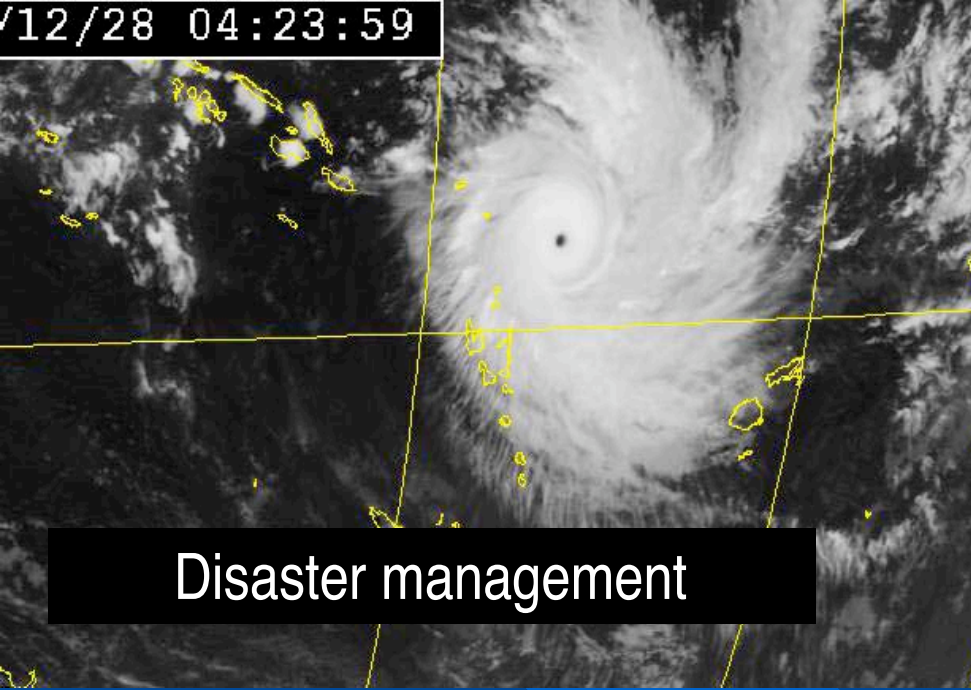
Sustainable livelihoods



Rural credit + solar power +
communications =
Rural “business incubator”



Farmer's networking



Disaster management



Women's networking



Community consultations:

i.e.

Constitutional reform

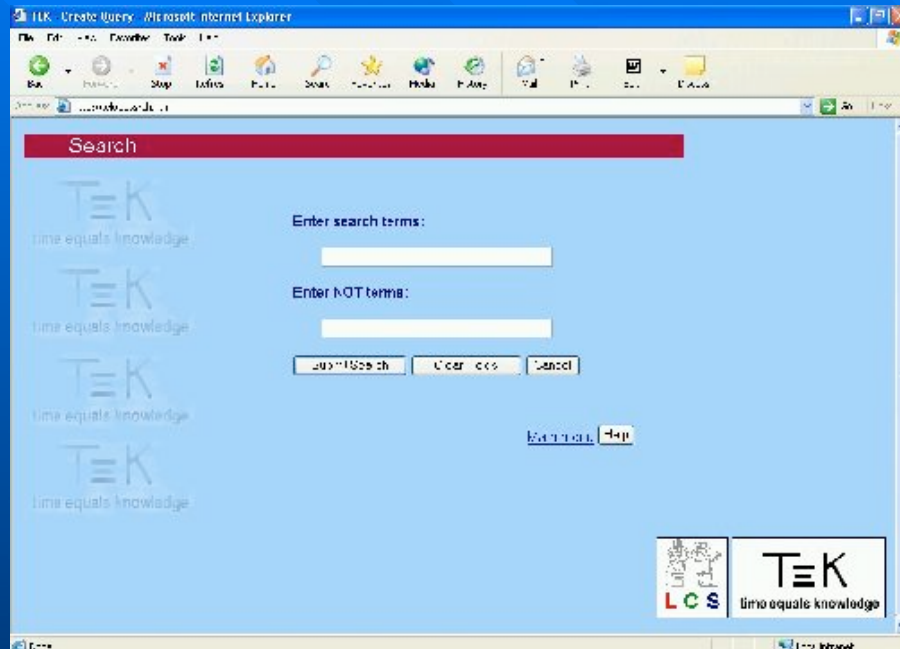
Community policing

Rights awareness

Services

- * Email – community and private accounts
- * Searching on the Internet
- * News reports (2-way)
- * Sharing information from/with partners
- * Secretarial services
- * Rural consultations and feedback
- * Weather warnings and disaster reporting

Tools for creative bandwidth management



TEK email search engine (MIT)

<http://tek.sourceforge.net>

RANET / Worldspace





Internet Centre in Honiara generates revenues to support the activities

Rural Development e-Citizen Portal



UNDP-UNOPS



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PFnet News Column

Rural-Local-International-Development-Peace

This column is maintained by the People First Network
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Lead Story

[Australia to give more assistance to the Solomons](#)

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, RAMSI announces more financial assistance from Australia.



[New ICT in the Pacific Publication by ADB](#)

[What is PFnet?](#)

[PFnet and USP Launch Trials using PFnet for Distance Learning](#)



(Photo: JIM BAYNES)

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[Zama: Finance system workable](#)

08 October 2003

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (PFnet News) - Minister of Finance, Francis Zama says existing

New!
Intervention Awareness

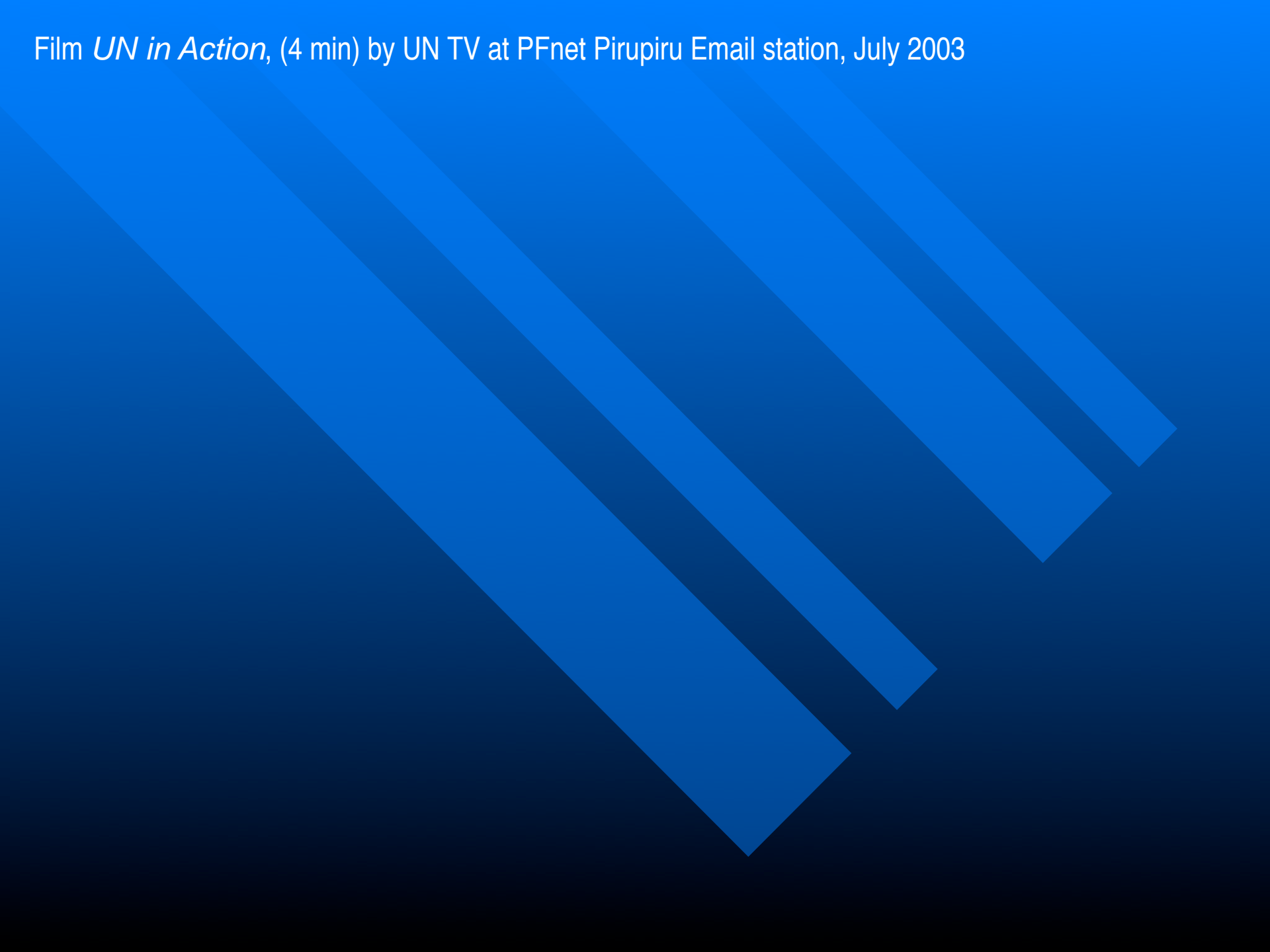


[Royal Solomon Islands Police Service](#)

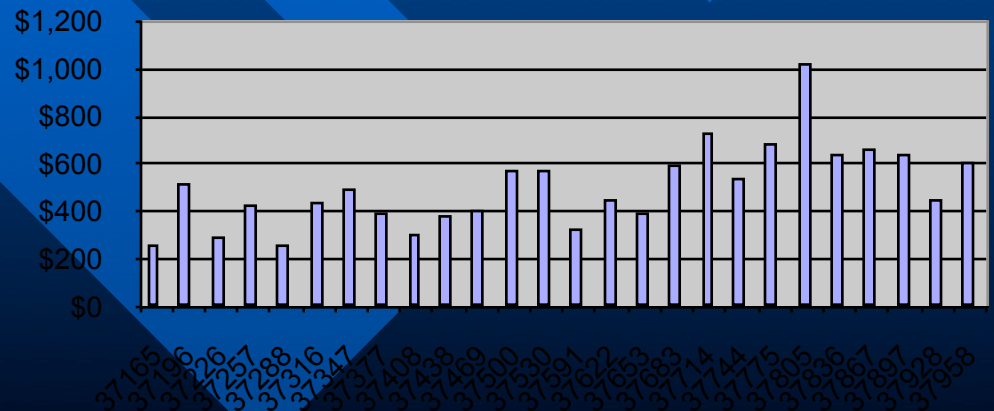
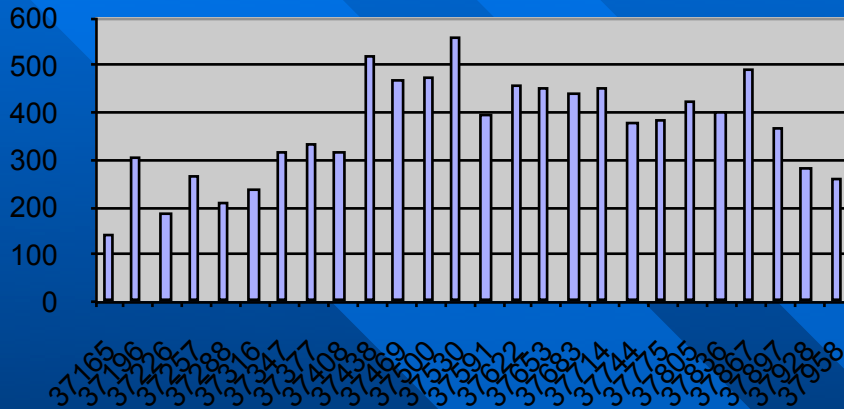


Human Rights

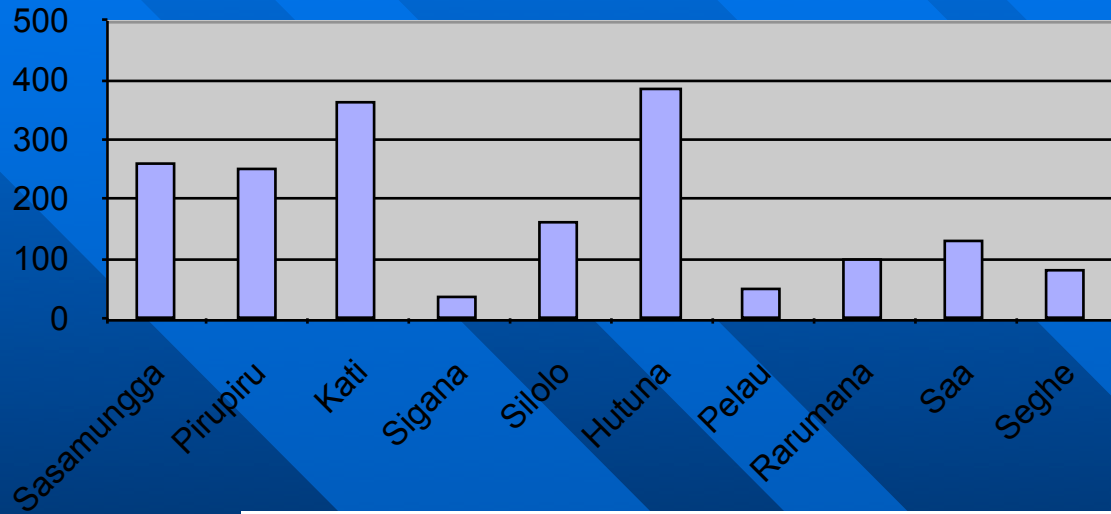
Film *UN in Action*, (4 min) by UN TV at PFnet Pirupiru Email station, July 2003



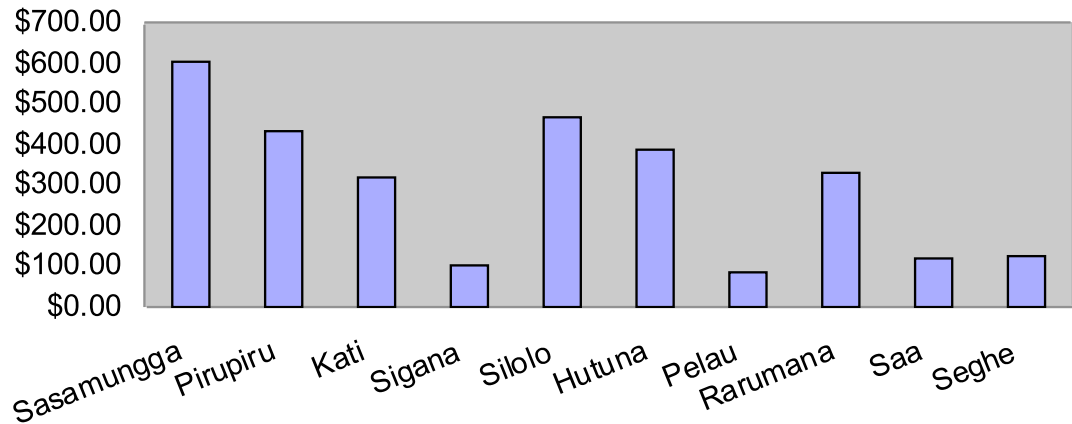
Monitoring and Research



Station Usage



December 2003 Takings



User Profile

- Sample size – 6152 Sent

Usage By Gender

- 24% of emails sent are generated by women
- 76% by Men

Usage Education Level

- University Level – 7%
- College Education – 35%
- Up to Form 6 – 5%
- Up to form 3 (secondary) – 30%
- Primary – 19%
- None – 4%

Usage By Age Group

- 20's – 11%
- 30's – 31%
- 40's – 30%
- 50's – 22%
- over 60 – 5%

Email Destination

- Domestic (SI) 77%
- Overseas – 23%

Main Subjects

- Family – 48%
- Education – 10%

Current Research

- * Social impacts
- * Factors affecting uptake / appropriation
- * January 2004
- * JICA funded
- * USP with UNDP and PFnet
- * 5 locations to be studied

Research on National ICT Strategy

- * Currently no ICT Strategy in place in S.I.
- * Regional ICT Policy Plan (2001)
- *

Effects:

- * Lack of focus
- * Partners not collaborating – no synergy
- * Dependant on personalities
- * ICT not used widely in Solomon Islands

ICT Strategy Building workshop

Held to:

- * Identify why ICT4D is not use more widely
- * Build a consensus on priority objectives
- * Provide guiding documentation for ICT strategy building

Outcomes

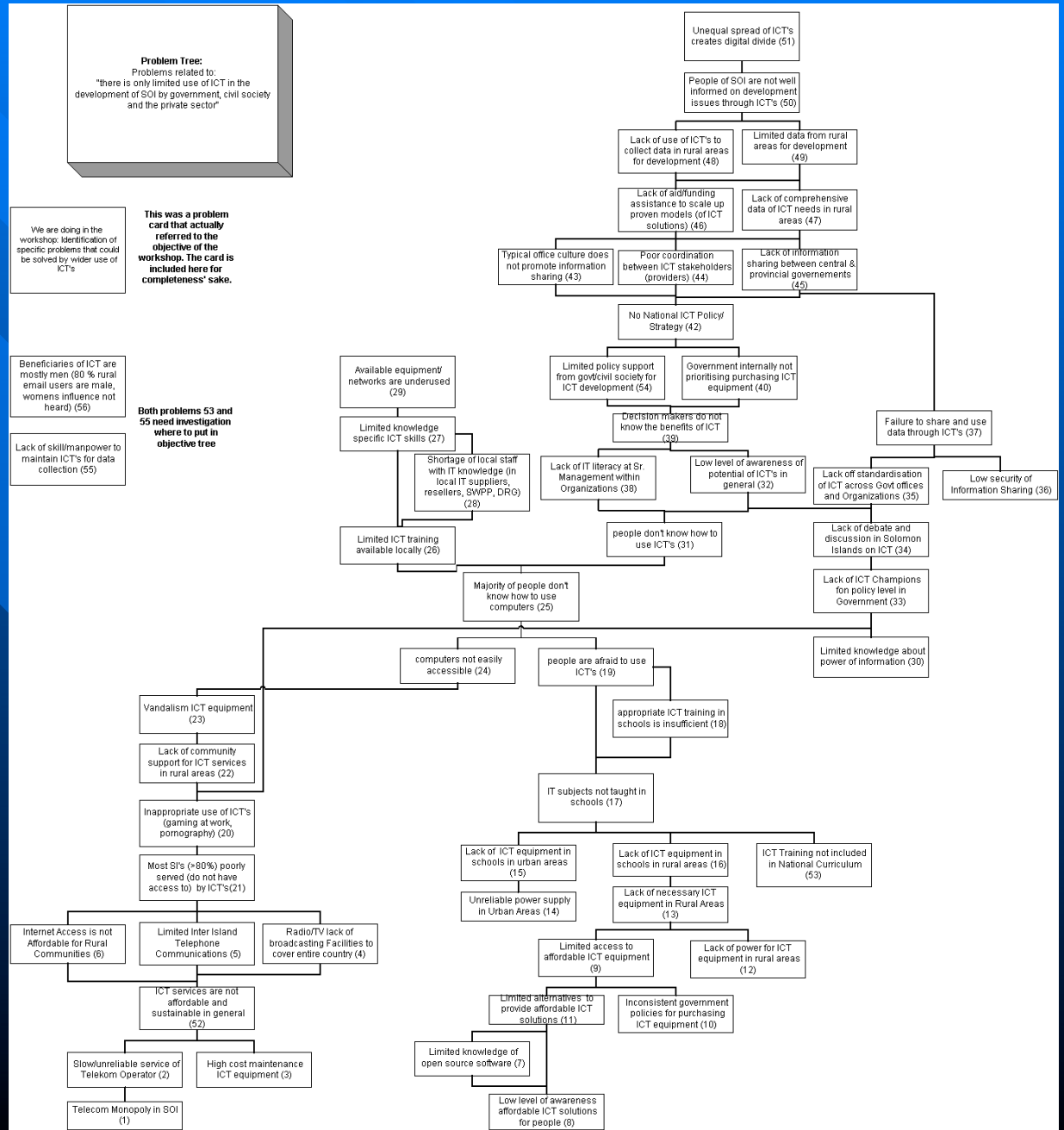
- * Problem and objectives trees constructed using OOPP
- * Priority objectives clusters identified
- * Document published (e.J.o.I.S.D.C)
- * Solomon Islands ICT Working Group created as national steering council
- * Included in e-Pacifika (UNDP)

Problem Tree

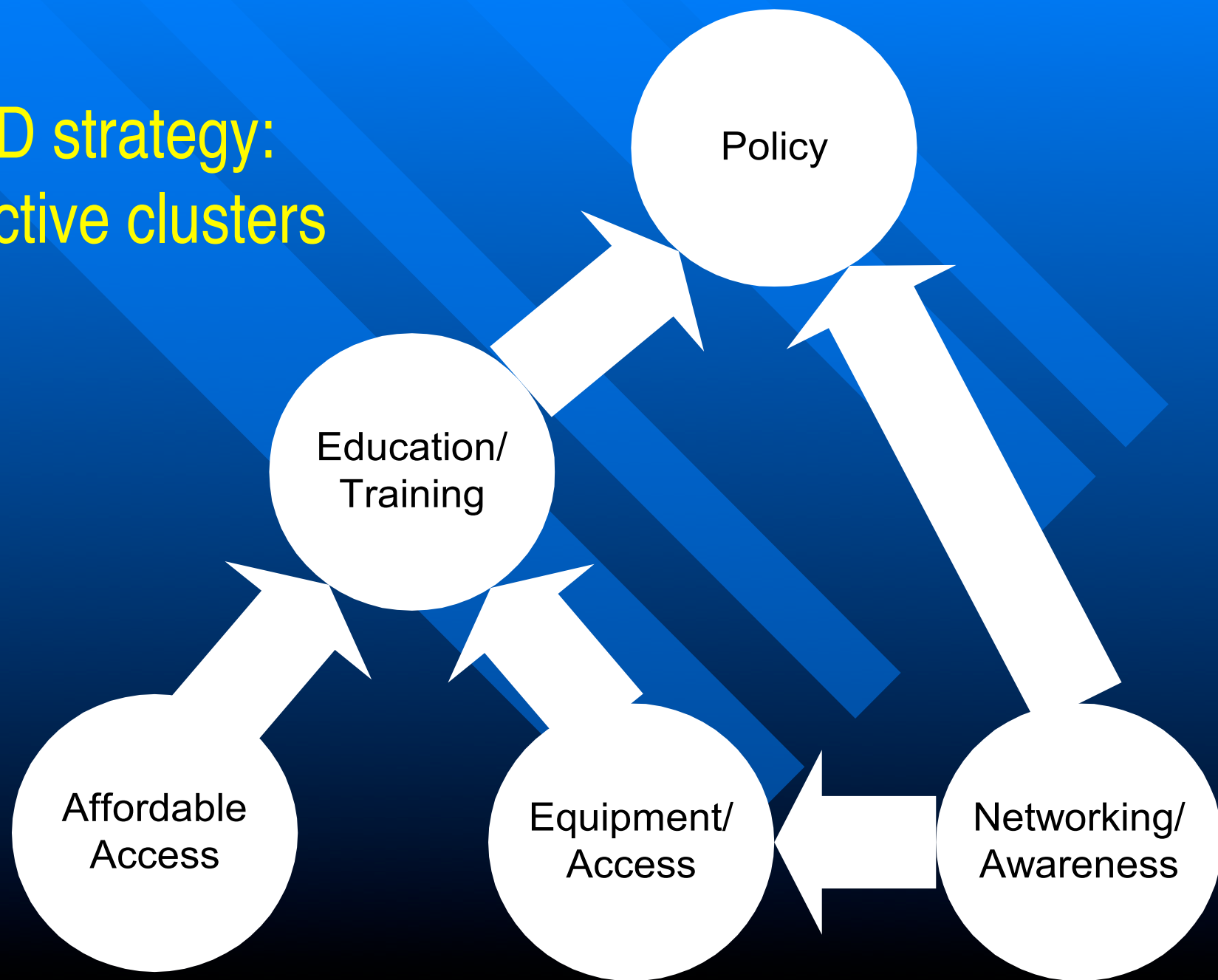
55 problems associated with the use of ICT in development in Solomon Islands

Mapped onto a corresponding Objectives Tree

Objective clusters identified

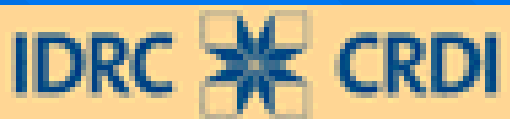


ICT4D strategy: Objective clusters





Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme



Distance education trials

People First Network

University of South Pacific Centre, Honiara



Objectives

OVERALL

To provide improved educational opportunities for Solomon Islanders, especially in rural areas

SPECIFIC

- n Pilot a distance learning computer centre
- n Trial the delivery of USP modules by email
- n Provide baseline research data on impacts
- n Build rural and national capacity and awareness

What we did

- n Computer centre in rural village
- n Enrolled and trained 20 USP students
- n Supervised 10 students in distance studies
- n Assignments, tutorials and counselling by email
- n Research interview program
- n Participatory evaluation and workshop for education stakeholders

(June-October 2002)



Evaluation

- n The trials proved the utility of the ICT
- n Improved success rates, turnaround and student-tutor relationships
- n All participants needed training to use the low-bandwidth system
- n All academic staff should be involved
- n Main problem concerned access to reference material

Follow up

- n Proposed project starting March 2004
- n E-learning centres in 9 rural schools
- n Funded by EU (circa Euro 1.2m)
- n Integrated education strengthening
- n Need for local solutions
- n VSAT
- n Partnership with Solomon Telekom

Funding since Oct 2000 (US\$)

* Government of Japan	140K
* NZAid	125K
* UNDP (direct)	66K
* UNDP (through SIDAPP)	60K
* Government of Britain	60K
* EU – supported 4 community stations directly	32K
* Government of R.O.C.	20K
* APDIP	9K
* AusAid – supported 1 community directly	8K
* Oxfam	1K

