

ICT's, Sustainable Rural Development and Poverty Reduction in the Solomon Islands: The case of the People First Network

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Research aims Objective 1: Questions Relating to Access and Utilizations of the PFNet project

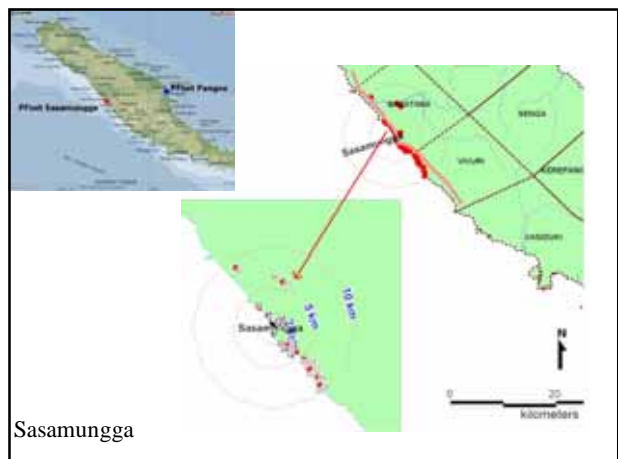
- Why do certain email stations generate more revenue than others?
 - What are the main issues affecting community uptake and appropriation of services?
 - Why do people use PFNet services?
 - Who are the main users?
 - Why are only 20-25% of the users of the email stations women? What are the reasons for this? What are the recommendations to increase women's participation?
 - What are the principal factors underlying differences in utilization amongst the fourteen existing email stations
 - What are the information needs of differing groups (women, the elderly, farmers, students, entrepreneurs and business people, etc) in the nine existing email stations

Research Aims - Objective 2: Questions Relating to the Impact of the PFNet on sustainable rural development

- Has the PFNet project improved the livelihoods of people in PFNet project communities? If so how?
 - What groups in these communities have benefited most? Which groups have benefited the least?
 - Has the PFNet project in PFNet project communities contributed to:
 - o Environmental awareness and sustainable resource management and/or
 - o Improved gender equality in PFNet project communities, if so how? And/or
 - o Improved well-being (including health and security) for people in PFNet project communities?
 - o Peace building and reconciliation?
 - In what ways have any improvements to livelihoods, environmental awareness, gender equality and well-being been sustained?
 - Has the PFNet project been able to increase awareness of the use of ICT's as an enabler for Development at the policy and decision maker level in the Solomon Islands? If so how? Has the PFNet project stimulated the activity at the policy level in the Solomon Islands?
- What linkages to other projects (also focusing on Japanese funded projects in light of the Japanese funding for PFNet/PFNet replica) and new initiatives can be considered for the future?

Research Methodology

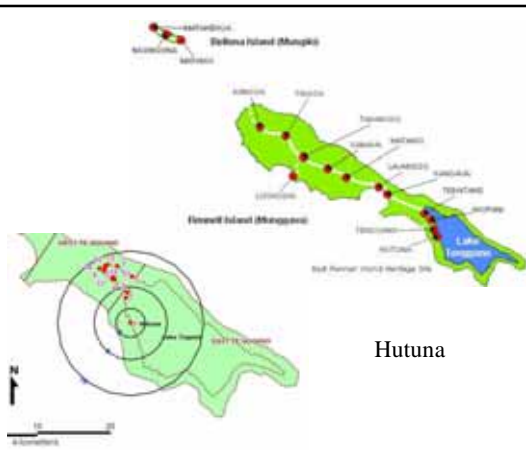
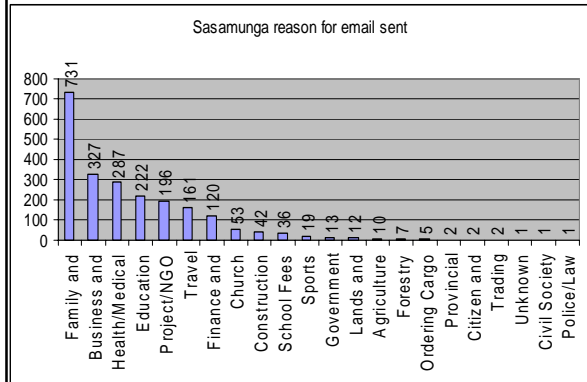
- A triangulation of research methods were used. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used.
 - Interviews via a structured questionnaire- sample size of 500 respondents interviewed
 - Interviews with key informants/ stakeholders/government officials
 - Focus group meetings
 - Literature review
 - Use of existing data by PFNet and RDVA



User log summary – Sasamungga

	Total	Male	Female	Users living within certain distances (km) from email station			
				<2	2-5	5-10	>10
Number of unique users	121	83 (69%)	38 (31%)	81 (67%)	27 (23%)	10 (8%)	3 (2%)
Unique transactions	394	287 (73%)	107 (27%)	271 (69%)	91 (23%)	23 (6%)	9 (2%)
% of population who are users				11%	6%	3%	
Number of users/family				0.71	0.36	0.18	

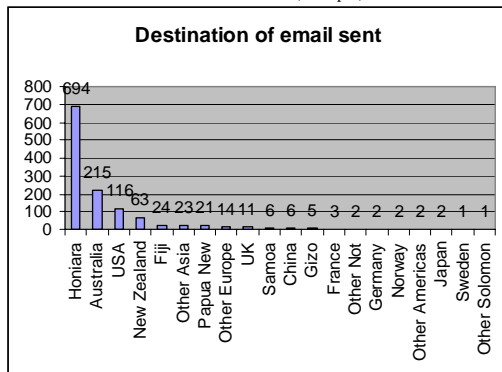
Reasons why people send email – Sasamungga (example)



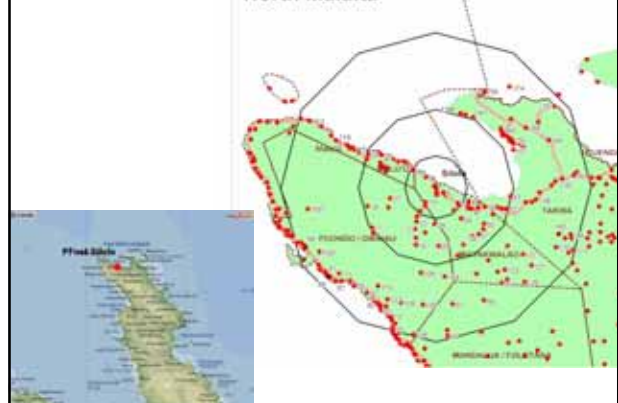
User log summary – Hutuna

	Total	Male	Female	Users living within certain distances (km) from email station		
				<2	2-10	>10
Individual users	89	52 (58%)	37 (42%)	56 (63%)	22 (25%)	11 (12%)
Unique transactions	329	202 (61%)	127 (39%)	245 (75%)	66 (20%)	18 (5%)
% of population who are users				26%	4%	0.5%
Number of users/family				1.2	0.14	0.02

Destination of email – Hutuna (example)

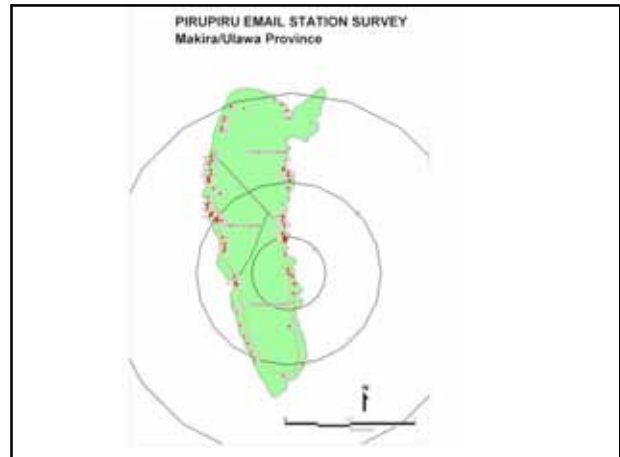


SILOLO EMAIL STATION SURVEY North Malaita



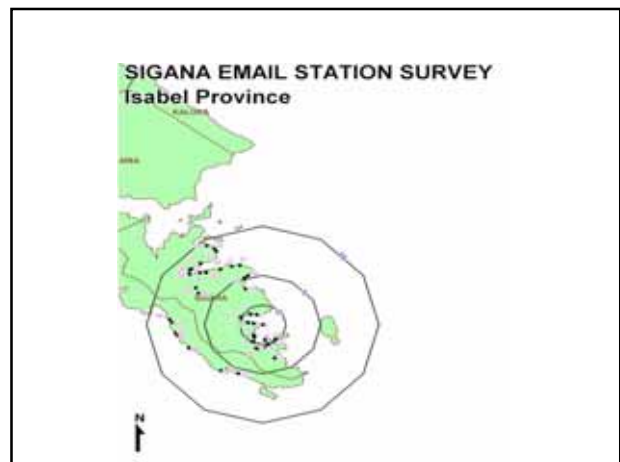
User log summary – Silolo

	Total	Male	Female	Users living within certain distances (km) from email station			
				<2km	2-5	5-10	>10
Individual users	79	64 (81%)	15 (19%)	14 (17%)	38 (48%)	22 (28%)	5 (6%)
Unique transactions	202	145 (72%)	57 (28%)	57 (28%)	91 (45%)	49 (24%)	5 (2%)
% of population who are users				4%	2%	0.4	
Number of users/family				0.2	0.11	0.02	



User log summary – Pirupiru

	TOTAL	Male	Female	Users living within certain distances (km) from email station			
				<2	2-5	5-10	>10km
Individual users	107	70 (65%)	37 (35%)	35 (33%)	31 (30%)	10 (9%)	31 (30%)
Unique transactions	225	166 (74%)	59 (26%)	113 (50%)	54 (24%)	11 (5%)	47 (21%)
% of population who are users				11%	7%	2%	2%
Number of users/family				0.57	0.35	0.09	0.10



User log summary – Sigana

	Total	Male	Female	Users living within certain distances from email station		
				<2	2-5	5-10
Individual users	43	36 (84%)	7 (16%)	28 (65%)	6 (14%)	9 (21%)
Unique transactions	109	98 (90%)	11 (10%)	59 (54%)	23 (21%)	27 (25%)
% of population who are users				6%	4%	1%
Number of users/family				0.29	0.22	0.05

OBJECTIVE 2

- Impact on rural development

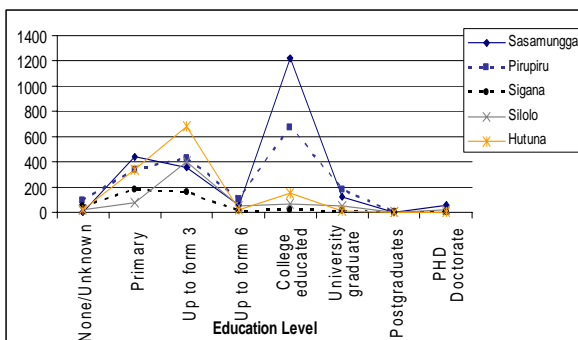
Service delivery

- Communication
 - PFNet has increased the communication network between:
 - the remote rural villages (in distant islands) and the capital Honiara
 - remote villages and other towns
 - remote villages and overseas countries e.g. DFL students sending assignments via email.

Assist in Education

- Many schools are already using the email to contact the education authorities.
- Students are using the email to arrange further studies
- Families use the email to arrange school fees and communicate with students
- Students overseas are able to communicate with their families in their home villages
- The Vocational sector is also benefiting eg Rural Teacher Training College

EDUCATION : Education level of email senders



Creates and enhances economic/business activities

- It has led to the creation of new business activities for rural dwellers for example a 'fish delivery company' was formed one station.
- It has enhanced existing business
- Develop business contracts in Honiara and other towns
- Find out shipping schedules
- Find out the price of goods/stock in Honiara
- More farming/agriculture news and information
- Contact bank for financial transactions

Provides benefits to government institutions and NGOs

- Health centres/hospitals communicating to each other
- Schools communicating to each other
- Provincial government departments communicating with each other
- Church organisations communicating each other
- community organisations communicating with each other

Enhances effective governance

- rural people knew about central government operations
- people enhanced knowledge of provincial government

Helps conflict prevention and recovery process (ethnic conflict)

- PFNet was able to provide objective/correct information on the facts during and after the ethnic conflict
- Got rid of all the rumours and misinformation

Helps politicians to communicate with their constituency

- Politicians used PFNet to inform people in their constituency about government action and policies affecting their area

Brings about Awareness of human rights issues

- PFNet helped raise awareness of people's human rights, especially helped women regarding their rights

Provides a better global picture/news

- People were able to know what was going on in the world

Improvement in the standard of living

- PFNet helped people check for vacancy and find work
- Helped in their career opportunities

Impact on Environment awareness and sustainable resource management

- Forestry
 - » Illegal logging
- Fisheries
 - » RFEP
- Small enterprise
 - Seaweed
 - » Seaweed project
 - Agriculture
 - Kastom Gaden Association
- Taro diseases
 - Environmental awareness and conservation

Capacity building

- Rural people get trained in computer skills, typing, Internet. They have some idea how the PFNet operates and helps their literacy
- Operators get trained
- Committee members at each of the station get trained
- People and staff at Honiara PFNet headquarters capacity building

Improved gender equality

- The PFnet project has improved gender equity as follows:
 - Improved voice
 - Better networking
 - More access to opportunities
 - Awareness of networking
 - National level – strengthened networking in VBMS, NERDP, ICT strategy etc
 - RRRT

Provide urgent/important news to people

- Weather
- Disaster Management
- News and trusted info

Beneficiaries

- The project has benefited:
 - Women
 - Young and old people
 - Students and teacher
 - Health Workers
 - Education Workers
 - Business People
 - Church workers
 - Local government
 - Police
 - Tourism