

Friends of Suai/Covalima Strategic Plan Review Report

Outcome 1: The Covalima Community Centre (CCC) and its programs are strengthened towards sustainability.

The report commences with general findings about the effectiveness of the CCC, followed by more specific findings related to the Strategic Plan's strategies.

Methodology

To review Outcome 1 of the Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoSC) Strategic Plan, face to face interviews were conducted in Dili and Suai by Megs Alston, Chair of FoSC and Carlene Harlock, FoSC Coordinator. Interviews were conducted with CCC Commission members, Director, Program Coordinators, program beneficiaries and the Municipal Administrator of Covalima Administrator. Translation was required for most interviews.

Interviewees were asked questions about their experiences with the CCC and its programs, with the 'most important change' methodology used as the framework for gathering evidence. The responses have been collated according to themes and this report includes direct quotes from interviewees.

Context

Like the rest of the world Timor-Leste has contended with the COVID-19 pandemic, with border closures, banning of international travel, restrictions on domestic travel and lockdowns in many areas. The economic effects are being felt now, coupled with the rising costs of goods and fuel due to global factors including the war in Ukraine and the contraction of China's economy.

In addition, in the midst of the pandemic, Timor-Leste experienced the worst flooding in recent years in April 2021. All parts of the country were affected by flash flooding and 34 people died as a result. Nationwide, it is estimated that 30,322 households were affected.

Locally, in Suai, the effects of COVID were mentioned by respondents as the major challenge faced over the past two years. The Municipal Administrator, Sr Francisco de Andrade, cited economic problems in the District of Covalima, because people couldn't access local markets. *"Lockdown was very difficult for many people. Many faced starvation because of lack of food."*

Another issue cited is that as a result of the slowdown in the economy, unemployment has increased in Covalima, which is a big challenge for youth.

More general issues included lack of National Government connection with local problems, and an inability to meet needs throughout the Covalima District. The CCC Director Alberto de Jesus Barros referred to the fact that power still hasn't devolved to the Municipal Government to make decisions about local projects, or distribute funds for civil society support: *"So the government*

system is the big challenge". The CCC Commission Chair Amelia de Jesus Amaral said that the community is not always the first priority: "Government is not always concerned with the community's needs."

Human resource capacity was also mentioned more than once as a major challenge. *"We need capacity-building, leadership training and other training for the whole community".*

On a more positive note, the appointment of a new Municipal Administrator in 2021 has brought positive changes in the local environment. *"The new Administrator puts people first. His slogan is 'together with people, by people, for people'."* Two examples cited were that during the COVID lockdowns, the new Administrator found food to be distributed throughout the district for vulnerable people, especially along the border. *"This was a big change as previously no-one really cared about food shortages."* And with disasters, *"in the past it normally took months to report but in the last two years the new Administrator has responded quickly and involved the CCC. There were rapid assessments for the victims and support was delivered in good time."* Alberto Barros

Other changes over the past two years cited by the CCC Director were that CCC's strategic planning is now done independently of FoSC and this helped to secure project funding; signing the 3rd 10 year Friendship Agreement was important for the CCC as it *"gave us more confidence to deal with the National Government"*; and the local administration is a lot more supportive of the CCC and its work.

Core funding

The outcomes achieved through the funding provided principally by the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) for the operations of the CCC were reviewed, focusing on the value of the CCC, its reputation and status within the District of Covalima.

Value of the CCC

The CCC was extremely well regarded by all interviewees and considered to be an important community organisation in Suai and more widely across the Covalima District. It is seen as a major player in the development of the community, focused on providing opportunities for people through a number of training initiatives like IT and English language training. The provision of scholarships for young people, raising awareness about several issues of concern such as gender equality, disaster preparedness and response, public health and climate change through the programs it manages, have all enhanced its reputation. It is trusted and respected within the community.

"It's 100% dedicated to the benefit of the community, the programs really benefit them. It has a big reputation in Covalima because of its many programs. There is no corruption, many people know of its good reputation, it is transparent and accountable." Amelia de Jesus Amaral

"Its reputation is higher than other local NGOs because of its reach. Not just in one or two places but as with international NGOs, it covers many areas."

"It had big impact on our community during COVID. Explaining hand hygiene, setting up hand washing stations, food distribution, social distancing. When the government implements something, CCC collaborates, participates with its networks. Human resources have been

strengthened by the CCC. Many people did IT and English training.” Francisco de Andrade, Municipal Administrator

“At many meetings I attend with government and other organisations, CCC is always mentioned, especially its role in disaster response, prevention.” Francisco Sarmiento, CCC Commission member and District Head of Forestry

Particularly in the past two years, during the pandemic, CCC was seen as resilient.

Aureo Moniz, World Vision Program Coordinator in Suai described the CCC as a resilient organisation in the light of how many local NGOs have folded since the pandemic began. He said it is only the international NGOs and CCC that are still operating in several parts of the district. *“CCC is highly regarded and did a very good job with the work of COVID prevention and education. Local and national media coverage gave them good exposure.”*

“Because of COVID many organisations stopped activities, but we continued as normal although staff could not travel. We continued to have donor support. We had good relations with the Police and had permission to continue with our work, especially about COVID prevention...that was a change from the past.” Alberto Barros

Status

The status of the CCC has heightened in recent years. Not only because of its role during the pandemic but also because of its policies and commitment to community development, it is seen as a leader in Covalima.

“It’s stronger than others because CCC touches the community with its support for vulnerable families, for scholarships, and also over the last two years its support with COVID relief, so this enhanced its reputation and raised its profile higher than others– because it was always in the media.” Francisco Sarmiento. He also reported hearing good things from the community about the CCC, and from government and community leaders who received computer training from the CCC.

“CCC policies have been adopted by other organisations, for example on sexual harassment. They are a good example as CCC staff work hard, there is a better work culture, they are punctual for work. Many visitors come to CCC when they visit Suai.” Amelia Amaral

“It’s well known through involvement in networks, in many programs and activities in the district, we always engage with community leaders.... signing the Friendship Agreement also elevated CCC to a high level in National Government.” Alberto Barros

Achievements

Major achievements in the past two years cited by the CCC Director were that donors continued their support and that staff increased their capacity to manage work, lessening the burden on him. Additionally, the CCC developed its own strategic plan. He also cited the organisation’s sustainability due to the investment made in staff development: *“Other donors don’t always support capacity building as has been invested in CCC, and some donors don’t continue with their support for long.”* He feels trusted by the Friends of Suai, *“they don’t blame if there are mistakes.”*

The Municipal Administrator cited *“saving peoples’ lives from COVID”*.

The Head of Forestry reported that CCC’s role is very important as a development partner. *“With some problems the community sees CCC can develop programs to address these, whereas government and even other NGOs don’t see, or think about them, for example solar panels. The disaster response structure from municipality in Suai to villages: it’s easier for CCC to get to the village quickly with communication of early warning systems. Government does not yet have this in place.”*

Strategy 1: Support CCC priority programs in education, public health, climate adaptation, livelihoods, social enterprise and advocacy

Three programs were examined to measure their achievements and whether they had a positive impact on the community: Scholarships, With One Seed, and Civic Health. Interviewees were asked about changes that have occurred as a result of these programs.

Scholarships

The scholarship program is one of the best known programs of the CCC and has raised its profile in Covalima. There have been 169 scholarships provided since the program began in 2012 and the number of students who complete their training and graduate is extremely high. Since the beginning of 2020, 18 new scholarships have been offered, despite the pandemic and 88% of these students have graduates or are continuing their studies.

Achievements cited included getting jobs and thus changing lives through being able to provide families with support; increasing the capacity of human resources in the wider community; benefiting the whole community by giving opportunities to those whose parents are unable to support them to further their education; contributing to the development of others in Covalima and all through Timor-Leste as teachers or in small business; changing attitudes, behaviour, presentation and confidence; enabling more women to get jobs; and with nursing and midwifery training, helping mothers in the future. *“A student receiving a scholarship is a clear outcome which people can see and understand”*. Bernadino de Jesus, CCC Education Program Coordinator

Most important changes:

“After training they can get a job which changes their family life, gives them support, a secure place to live, they have money....” Alberto Barros

“The deep learning that students have, the confidence and the practical skills they develop which they can apply. This give them opportunities beyond Suai, at a national level, so they can meet new people and have new opportunities.” Bernadino de Jesus

CASE STUDY 1

Octaviana Blandina de Jesus

Octaviana graduated in March 2022 as a teacher after four years of study at Baucau Marista Teachers’ College. She is the eldest of six children. She is currently teaching English on a voluntary basis at Sandalo Secondary School in Suai and wants to remain there, where she hopes to be appointed as a teacher. She enjoys putting the knowledge gained at teachers’ college into practice.

She said the scholarship has greatly changed her. As a result of her training, she learned how to manage her time and is able to use her knowledge to teach English to the students.

"I am able to put theory into practice, have learned how to engage the students, how to manage them in the classroom. Also, I can teach other subjects, I have confidence now. I had good training especially on how to work in a group, how to apply the skills I learned; that I must not talk too much and get the students to express their ideas; how to apply student-centred learning."

The most important change for Octaviana: *"I can stand in front of a class of students and I know how to educate them, teach them to be punctual. I want to be a professional teacher, to help people in Timor-Leste who need your help and to stay in Covalima."*



"I want to be a professional teacher, to help people in Timor-Leste who need your help and to stay in Covalima"

*Octaviana Blandina de Jesus
Scholarship recipient and graduate
from Baucau Teachers College*

CASE STUDY 2

Idalia da Costa Barros

Idalia graduated from the Canossian Vocational Training Centre in Suai in 2017, completing a Certificate 2 in Hospitality. Idalia is 26 years old, married and has a two year old who lives with Idalia's parents in Suai.

From Matai village, where her parents are farmers, she attended Seran Kotek school. She wanted to study hospitality because *"preparing food is an important skill to support the family"*. Idalia wanted to live in Dili when she was young, and this scholarship gave her the opportunity.

After graduating, Idalia applied for a job at the restaurant where she completed her placement, then changed jobs to work at a café at Timor Plaza in Dili.

The most important change for Idalia: *"I have been able to support my family – grandmother, parents and four siblings. I have supported my sister to study Economics at UNITAL university in Dili and she has graduated. I am supporting my brother to study Korean language"*.

“I have been able to support my family – grandmother, parents and four siblings.”

*Idalia da Costa Barros
Hospitality scholarship recipient,
at her workplace at Timor Plaza in
Dili*



With One Seed

Under this reforestation program, 45,401 trees have been planted in three years, with 152 small landholders receiving trees.

Achievements

People in the community now get an income of 50 cents per tree per year; they own their trees and will own the carbon credits attached to those trees.

Municipal Administrator Francisco de Andrade believes it brings great value to the communities as it *“...contributes to action on climate change, protects the people and they can get income and savings. It will save people’s lives in future...”*

Program Manager Januario Inacio cited its importance because of climate change and the need to plant more trees for the future. The payment to participating farmers means, *“...they can change their families, it benefits their families...”* He also mentioned the benefit to the CCC as *“staff have gained knowledge and expertise in this program and its technology, methods and processes.”*

District Head of Forestry Francisco Sarmiento mentioned the significant benefit and support to the Ministry of Agriculture, that it contributes to the Forestry Department objectives by growing more trees, preventing deforestation and reducing teak trees which have reduced the water table, thus preventing disasters in future. He said the government has a plan but the With One Seed model could be adopted and replicated. Benefits to farmers include protecting their land from erosion, assisting sustainability, protecting the environment and also giving economic benefits.

“This is a big change in their lives because every year they receive an incentive and also plant other crops on the land, food and vegetables. Previously they only derived income from selling an animal or some food crops like corn.”

The most important change for Francisco Sarmiento is in the short-term, *“.. seeing the enthusiasm from the local community as it really benefits those who have trees, and at the same time the program is building awareness, with enthusiasm to extend to other areas.”*

Januario Inacio.... *“The farmers protect the land from erosion; ...protect the environment and it also gives economic benefits. It lowers air pollution because of carbon being held in the trees.”*

CASE STUDY

Umbelina Madeira

Umbelina lives in Beiseuc aldeia (sub village) She has three children and is maintaining 750 trees. From the income she now receives she has supported her family needs; being able to buy food like rice and cooking oil, and it has helped with sending her child to school.

She says that more people are now aware of the opportunities and there are many more attracted to join the program. There are 21 more people from her aldeia who want to join next year. A key achievement is that the trees have improved the environment, *“everything now looks green”*.

She received 800 trees, but they were given a bit too late and in the beginning a lot of young trees died as they were planted after the rains. She suggests that in future the trees are given to them earlier and they can plant in November.

The most important change for Umbelina: *“the trees will reduce erosion and reduce the landslides that occur after rain.”*



“The trees will reduce erosion and reduce the landslides that occur after rain.”

“Everything now looks green.”

*Umbelina Madeira, Beiseuc aldeia
WoS farmer maintaining 750 trees on her land*

Civic Health

The CCC COVID education and prevention program covered 30 villages and 130 sub villages, provided information about COVID and dengue fever and explained how to prevent the spread of COVID. The CCC health team was also appointed by District Health to disinfect around Suai town, especially public buildings and quarantine centres.

Achievements cited were that Covalima is still free of COVID and dengue fever. Using local languages when explaining and giving information (including Bunak and Tetum Terik) helped to achieve these outcomes.

The value to the CCC was that the staff gained experience of working together with local health centres and the community, and that the community received the information needed to help them.

“The community trusts the CCC information and staff, as sometimes they don’t trust the information from the health department about vaccinations. We had to counteract the false information on social media about COVID and vaccinations by using local languages to explain

correct health information. Also, the staff from CCC had vaccinations so that they could tell the people it was safe and beneficial.” Januario de Fatima, CCC Health Program Coordinator

Most important change:

“The community understood COVID prevention and other diseases...because of our work they obeyed protocols and still today Covalima is free of COVID and dengue fever.” Januario de Fatima

“Many people died of COVID in the country, although only one or two died here. We stopped the transmission from West Timor into Covalima because of good collaboration and cooperation and the measures taken.” Alberto Barros

CASE STUDY

Juscelino da Silva

Juscelino is a farmer living in Tuledu aldeia, Tilomar sub district. He has four children. He received information from the CCC about COVID in April 2021. He recalled being told about “the need for hand washing, physical distancing, wearing a mask, and when travelling to any other places, to obey COVID protocols and do the same.”

The most important change for Juscelino: “It kept us free from COVID.”

“The need for hand washing, physical distancing, wearing a mask, and to obey COVID protocols”

“It kept us free from COVID.”

Juscelino da Silva, Tuledu aldeia
Received information from the CCC in April 2021 on
COVID protocols and prevention



Strategy 2: Assist and provide mentoring support for CCC capacity strengthening priorities in the areas of human resources, management and governance.

This strategy is largely funded by the CoPP annual grant to Friends of Suai/Covalima (FoSC) and has been instrumental in enabling the CCC to become a strong, well-functioning, well-managed and actively engaged local NGO. As expressed by many of the respondents interviewed, the value, reputation and status of the CCC is due to the high regard in which its staff are held and the trust they enjoy from the local community and local government. Other funders of some of the programs they manage testify to this capacity.

Andrew Mahar AM, Honorary Consul of Timor-Leste, is CEO & Director of Xpand Foundation and co-founder of the With One Seed Program, and has worked with the CCC previously on InfoTimor.

"I have a global view of the CCC staff as I have worked with them over a number of years. They are an extremely dedicated and capable group of people. The level and type of support provided over the years has been a nurturing relationship by FoSC – not directing. People are taking initiative, making decisions and feeling good about it. They are an absolute delight to work with."

CCC Director Alberto Barros explained that previously many staff relied on him but *"now people have confidence, I can delegate more to them."* They also train the community: *"we say 'staff as a bridge for community development' in the areas of child protection and gender equality now they train others and can train in the community."* Some staff are now able to develop funding proposals, develop and change policies and facilitate large meetings. And *"...the finance team now understands how to manage acquittals, how to manage finances, whereas previously I had to do everything myself. This is a big change in the programs team."*

Case studies featuring CCC staff explain how the opportunity to work, learn and develop at the Centre has changed their lives.

CASE STUDY 1

Antonieta Moniz (Anto), Manager Finance and Administration

Anto graduated from Maliana Agriculture School in 2012 and came to the CCC in 2013 for English and IT training, then trained others in IT as a volunteer. She became Assistant Finance Manager and undertook training in 2016. She has also had opportunities to participate in further training over ensuing years, including on leadership, finance, Quickbooks software, Excel, child protection and gender equality.

Key aspects of her role are to manage and monitor finances, using Excel and Quickbooks. Anto does the banking and checks balances, is responsible for cash requests from staff, which she checks before obtaining Director's approval, is responsible for monitoring all program budgets and pays staff salaries each month. She is also training Isabel, a volunteer who assists her, who is learning well on the job.

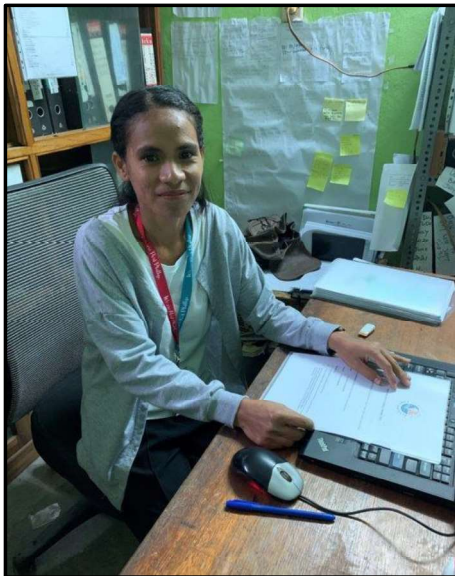
She says her main achievement is gaining financial knowledge and being able to operate the finance system.

Anto has one child. She and her husband live with her family, a household of eight. Her income from the CCC sustains her whole family, parents, brothers and sister. In addition, she assists her brother to study.

At a personal level her employment has made a significant change to her life.

"I am proud of myself, of my development and that I work at the CCC and am able to support my family with my income. Previously I just assisted the Vice Director of Finance but now I can operate and use all the financial systems. Since learning Quickbooks I am very confident about using the systems and am supported by the CCC Director to do this work. I now have more responsibility and more confidence."

Despite now having an income, she says she still wants to lead a simple life and share her money with her family.



"I am proud of myself, of my development and that I work at the CCC and am able to support my family with my income."

"I now have more responsibility and more confidence."

*Antonieta Moniz (Anto)
CCC Manager Finance and Administration*

CASE STUDY 2

Deonizio dos Santos (Nizio) Coordinator of IT Social Enterprise

Nizio has worked at CCC since 2011, at first as a volunteer then a trainer in IT. His role covers the IT needs of CCC as well as training students, providing staff support and managing the IT Social Enterprise.

Key tasks include preparing reports, planning the budget for selling and marketing computers, providing hardware and software support. Most IT marketing is done on Facebook and WhatsApp, supplemented by publicity material placed in public places. He enjoys managing the computers donated by CoPP.

Nizio has completed a Certificate 4 in Training & Assessment and has participated in training workshops about gender equality, conducting research and conflict resolution.

He lists his main achievements as an increase in the number of people buying IT equipment and computers, and conducting training, which he enjoys.

"We train people and they are able to get jobs, for example at the airport, with the police and government departments. We have trained government employees who now know how to use IT to improve their work. I am proud of that."

Nizio is from a family of eight children. He now lives with his wife and two children who are at primary school. At a personal level his job has made an enormous difference to his life. *"I was able to build a house for my family. I came to CCC as a volunteer and I have gone up from zero as now I manage the IT program."*

The most important change is related to family:

"I can support my family and meet my family's needs. Also, I support two younger brothers; one graduated from UNPAZ University in health and works at Maliana Church, and the other is studying teaching."

“I came to CCC as a volunteer and I have gone up from zero as now I manage the IT program.”

“I can support my family and meet my family’s needs.”

*Deonizio dos Santos (Nizio)
Coordinator of IT Social Enterprise*



Strategy 3: Support diversification of CCC funding and partnerships

The core operational costs of the CCC have been primarily funded by CoPP funding through an annual funding agreement. Core operational costs include salaries for key staff, social security costs, communications, administration, vehicle and building maintenance and meeting costs.

Additionally, CoPP has funded an annual external financial audit of the CCC, which is essential for the CCC to demonstrate to current and existing partners that they have the capacity to maintain accurate and transparent financial records.

Other CCC partners and donors have also funded some of the operational costs, including IWDA and Oxfam. Funding from Oxfam has now ceased, but IWDA continue to contribute to salaries and operational costs for the Centre. Sharing these costs with new partners is a focus for the CCC and they include this when writing funding proposals.

The CCC Director, Finance team and Program Coordinators have been focussed on diversifying their income sources. As well as seeking external funding, Alberto Barros advised that *“we have increased CCC income through hiring our facilities for meetings and trainings”*. The large number of computers donated by CoPP in the last 18 months has also significantly increased income to the IT Social Enterprise.

The CCC has had success with seeking new donors and partnerships. Amelia Amaral attributes this success to the CCC Director and team, stating *“partners have increased because of the leadership of the Director and good work of the staff.”*

Alberto Barros stated that *“the FoS Strategic Plan objective to increase by 10% has assisted me to find new partners”*. He confirmed that new donors included UNDP for installing solar panels, EU ‘Rai Matak’ funding for With One Seed and funding from the Office of Prime Minister Civil Society fund to conduct a social audit for the school feeding program. This is the first time the CCC has received funds through the national government and it is hoped that if successful, there will be further opportunities to seek funds to monitor and improve other government services.

Additionally, the CCC has also received funds from Asia Foundation, Give2Asia and ACBIT to implement short-term projects.

Alberto Barros said that new sources of income were identified through FONGTIL (Timor-Leste NGO Forum), communication through national networks and social media. He also identified that a key challenge in seeking new funding is that there is *“no-one to focus on finding new donors. I have networks but no-one is able to focus full time on writing proposals”*.

Annual increase in partners

The CCC has successfully increased the number of funding partners and amount of external partner income over the last three years. It is however important to note the short-term nature of these partnerships. For example:

- Oxfam programs are now completed
- UNDP and Office of Prime Minister (PM) Civil Society Fund projects will be completed in 2023
- Give2Asia, ACBIT and Asia Foundation provided funding for ad-hoc projects
- IWDA is a long-term partner of the CCC with commitments through until 2023/24
- EU Rai Matak funding will continue until October 2024

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of external partners	3	4	8
Partners listed	Oxfam IWDA Give2Asia	Oxfam IWDA Give2Asia Asia Foundation	Oxfam IWDA Give2Asia EU-Rai Matak UNDP PM Civil Society Fund Asia Foundation ACBIT
Total income from partnerships (USD)	\$141,196	\$125,625	\$156,110
% of income for CCC	61%	56.8%	59.4%

Annual income for CCC (USD)

The total income for CCC from all sources:

2019/20	\$231,303
2020/21	\$221,364
2021/22	\$263,080

These figures represent the global income for the CCC including all funds for core costs, programs and CCC income generating activities including training delivery.

The Strategic Plan sets a target for the CCC to increase external income by 10% pa. The CCC has successfully increased its partners and income, however it is still dependent on FoSC for core operational costs.

From 2019/20 to 2020/21, the CCC income decreased by 3%, however from 2020/21 to 2021/22, the overall income has increased by 18.8%. This is largely due to the increase in new partnerships in 2021/22.

The percentage of income from external partners has remained consistent, however there is an increase in income generated through the sale of computers donated by City of Port Phillip and hiring of training facilities.

The table below shows that despite the increase in annual income, the percentage of income from CoPP and FoSC has not changed significantly. CoPP is still the main contributor to the core operations of the CCC.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Income sources	% of total income		
CoPP & FoSC	32%	36%	31%
External income – partners (as above)	61%	56.8%	59.4%
IT Social Enterprise & training	5%	3.5%	8%
Hiring facilities & asset sales	2%	3.7%	1.6%

Outcome 2: CoPP and Covalima municipality and their communities are actively engaged in cultural exchange, mutual learning and development activities

Strategy 1: Increase engagement with CoPP schools and youth

and

Strategy 2: Increase engagement with community organisations, businesses and residents in the CoPP

Strategies 1 and 2 were not achieved, largely due to the onset of the COVID pandemic. Plans to increase the engagement of Albert Park College were not able to be progressed.

Strategy 3: FoSC hold community events and cultural exchanges (in person or virtual) to celebrate the friendship with the Covalima municipality; including engaging First Nations people

FoSC held a number of different events, both online and in person, to raise funds and celebrate the friendship. The following is a timeline of events which includes quotes about the importance and benefits of cultural exchange and celebration.

July 2020	<p>An online celebration and book launch for the 20th anniversary of the Friendship was well received, attended by 40 people including a team from Suai participating.</p> <p>Ambassador Ines Almeida spoke at this online celebration and described it as <i>“an honour to bear witness to the great work of FoSC”</i>.</p>
August 2020	<p>An online book launch of ‘Friendship for Development’ by Ann Wigglesworth had 85 attendees including staff from the CCC in Suai.</p> <p>Ann said that through researching this book about FoSC she knows that <i>“FoSC has brought great benefits to Port Phillip residents who have contributed their skills to the program. They speak in the book of how friendship has enriched their lives, brought joy and understanding, mutual respect in a shared cross cultural journey”</i></p>
November 2020	<p>An online silent auction was held to raise funds for scholarships. Sale of items and donations raised \$8,610.</p>
March 2021	<p>A community meeting was held online, sharing highlights from the 2019/20 annual report. The CCC team participated in this event and there were 27 attendees.</p>
April 2021	<p>A successful trivia night was held at Middle Park Bowls Club, with 97 tickets sold and \$10,172 raised.</p>
May 2021	<p>A launch was held for the Art of Friendship documentary by Jen Hughes, which was included in the online St Kilda Film Festival international program.</p>
November 2021	<p>An open day was held at the Art of Friendship exhibit in the Carlisle Street Arts Space. The exhibition had been installed in July 2021 but could not be viewed due to COVID restrictions. An annual community meeting was also held in the Gallery in the evening to share the 2020/21 Annual Report. There were 31 attendees, including three Councillors.</p> <p>Quote from Cr Louise Crawford Mayoral Speech at exhibition and community meeting: <i>“The Art of Friendship” is a concept beautifully captured and presented by this fantastic exhibition. What began as a gesture of support from Port Phillip has blossomed into a true cultural exchange – and friendship – between these two communities. Through paintings, photographs, film, glasswork and textiles, the exhibition tells the story of these enduring links. Our friendship began more than 20 years ago ... since that time, we have been touched to see the flourishing personal and artistic ties between Port Phillip and Suai/Covalima.”</i></p>
March 2022	<p>The fifth annual trivia night was held at Middle Park Bowls Club. Over 90 people attended, including six Councillors, and over \$11,600 was raised for programs.</p>

Here is a selection of quotes put to the Council when FoSC supporters requested Council to continue funding for the FoSC program.

“As we work to make our own community a better place, there are great advantages in looking beyond our own boundaries and learning from others. When we look at the needs, concerns and

situation of others, our own community is strengthened. It is extremely important for people of Australia to know our neighbours as people and to understand their culture and their needs.” Bill Armstrong

“Our community is contributing positively to the sphere of influence so needed in our global neighbourhood”. Jen Hughes

“I was delighted that my Council was thinking globally and acting locally. On a personal note, through involvement with FoSC I have made many close, like-minded friends. I find that they’re all inevitably very community minded and inclusive, and they’ve influenced me to participate in other local grassroots activities, particularly those with a cross cultural, environmental or arts focus”. Jane Crouch

In December 2019, CCC Director Alberto Barros and FoSC Coordinator Carlene Harlock had a Skype conversation with Tom Layton from Indigenous Community Volunteers (now Community First Development, with the intention of building links and networks between the CCC and other indigenous people/communities in Australia and PNG. Although email communication has continued, progress had stopped due to challenges faced by communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategy 4 – Reciprocal learning takes place between local government of CoPP and Covalima Community

The Statement of Friendship 2020-30 includes an MoU between the Municipalities of Port Phillip and Covalima. The MoU includes a commitment to ‘exploring new avenues and innovative ways of sharing information and skills’.

There have been challenges in enacting this agreement, to engage local government and to implement this strategy.

At the time the MoU was signed, Covalima District was awaiting the appointment of a new Municipal Administrator. Sr Francisco de Andrade was appointed in February 2021 and looks forward to increasing the engagement between the two municipalities in the next few years.

Outcome 3: FoSC is accountable, effective and efficient

Strategy 1 – Enhance communications with CoPP Council, staff, residents and stakeholders

The FoSC Coordinator and FoSC members have ensured regular communication has been maintained with the community, Councillors, CoPP staff and stakeholders.

Internally, Councillors have been provided with three updates each year of program activities and have also been invited to all FoSC events and fundraising activities. CoPP staff receive updates

through intranet and department newsletter articles, internal social media posts and invitations to events. Each year, Councillors and CoPP staff participate in the annual trivia night.

Newsletters, community emails, mailouts, website updates and Facebook posts are provided regularly with program updates and event invitations.

Quarterly reports have been provided to Rotary Club of Balwyn, a major contributor to the With One Seed reforestation project, to provide photos and updates.

Strategy 2 – Develop new donors and fundraising initiatives

New donors have supported the FoSC program, and an online silent auction was trialed in 2020, which raised \$8,610.

Annual increase in fundraising:

2019/20	\$53,460	
2020/21	\$65,256	increase of 22%
2021/22	\$74,229	increase of 14%

There has also been a small increase in the number of people on our mailing list, donating funds and attending events.

Strategy 3 – Increase and diversify membership of the Community Reference Committee and its working groups

The pandemic made it difficult to attract new members when all meetings were held virtually with fewer opportunities for public engagement. It is proving difficult to widen the membership, particularly as one of the proposed strategies to attract a wider audience was focused on engagement with school communities.

Strategy 4 – Implement the Community Reference Committee (CRC) Terms of Reference

and

Strategy 5 – Monitor Strategic Plan and annual budget

The CRC Terms of Reference were fully implemented, the Strategic Plan was monitored and the Coordinator's regular reporting and Annual Report were aligned with the Plan. An annual review of the Strategic Plan in 2021 was not possible to fully implement due to the inability to travel to Suai.

The Annual budget is monitored closely by the Coordinator and Treasurer, with all Council funds expended.