

# PACIFIC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (2012 - 2015)

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS:  
FIJI, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

DECEMBER 2015

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IWDA)

## IDENTITY

IWDA is the leading Australian agency entirely focussed on women's rights and gender equality in the Asia Pacific region. We are international, feminist and independent.

## VISION

IWDA's vision is for a world where every woman and man, girl and boy has equal rights and opportunities.

## MISSION

IWDA partners with others in the Asia Pacific region to advance women's human rights. We stand up for women and girls by tackling issues of power, money and security.

## VALUES

**F**eminist  
**A**ccountable  
**C**ollaborative  
**T**ransformative

IWDA works with our partners to break down barriers to women's equal power. We collaborate on research to understand attitudes towards women in leadership, and amplify that knowledge to global networks and decision-makers. We also work to develop leadership and advocacy pathways for women to increase the active incorporation of women's views and ideas at all levels of decision-making.

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# INTRODUCTION

This overview combines findings from the final evaluation of the Pacific Women's Leadership Program (PWLP) 2015, which builds on findings in the mid-term review as well as studies developed throughout the program, in order to communicate its work and achievements.

Feminist leadership development is at the heart of the PWLP, an initiative facilitated by IWDA. Understanding this, and what it involves in diverse Pacific contexts, provides a frame for this evaluation and its findings. Batliwala captures its essence:<sup>1</sup>

**"...there is little point in leadership development programs, if they do not equip women to deal with the messy, frightening, dangerous but exhilarating business of feminist social transformation. For every great feminist leader we can think of from anywhere in the world, past and present has one thing in common: she is led by challenging and disturbing the status quo. Feminist leadership must make waves."**



Participants of the 2015 FLOW Retreat in Cairns: Left Side: Agnes Titus, Brenda Samson, Lilly BeSoer, Maraia Tabunakawai. Right Side: Barbara Tanne, Rose Pihei, Sophie Kilipi. Photo Credit: Marta Jasinska

1. Srilatha Batliwala (2010) 'Feminist Leadership for Social Transformation: Clearing the Conceptual Cloud'.

# BACKGROUND

## THE PACIFIC WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The PWLP was managed by IWDA as part of the FLOW program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Netherlands. The program was a four-year, multi-country and multi-partner program that commenced implementation in April 2012.

The PWLP was implemented with the following IWDA program partner organisations between 2012-2015:

In Papua New Guinea (PNG):

- Bougainville Women's Federation
- Voice for Change incorporating Jiwaka Women's Human Rights Defenders
- Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation and Bougainville Women's Human Rights Defenders

In Fiji:

- Commonwealth Local Government Forum, based in Fiji, which works in PNG and the Solomon Islands
- FemLINK Pacific
- Fiji Women's Rights Movement
- Fiji Women's Forum
- Women's Action for Change

In Solomon Islands:

- Women's Rights Action Movement



### PWLP Objectives

The long-term objective of IWDA's program was: increased women's representation and civil and political leadership across three Pacific Island countries in order to drive gender equality (Fiji, Solomon Islands and PNG). In pursuit of this, the program focussed on five specific objectives:

- 1.** Increasing the capacity of women's civil society in Fiji, Solomon Islands and PNG to advocate for increased coherence between national and regional commitments to gender equality.
- 2.** Increasing young women's participation and inclusion in formal and informal leadership roles.
- 3.** Improving gender sensitivity of local government policy-making, programming and service delivery.
- 4.** Increasing voter willingness and ability to support women candidates in local, provincial and national elections in Fiji, Solomon Islands and PNG.
- 5.** Equipping women in PNG to have the capacity and support to lead responses to violence against women (VAW).

The PWLP commenced with partners in Fiji in 2012 and at the end of 2015 it is working with eight partner organisations in the Pacific region from Fiji, Solomon Islands and PNG.

Pacific women's representation in parliaments stands at 15.7%.<sup>2</sup> Women's absence from formal politics reflects and perpetuates the male-dominated cultures and gendered role divisions common in all Pacific countries. Patriarchal governance structures and cultural and religious norms have contributed to a situation in which women and young women are disempowered, have limited access to services, and are excluded from formal and informal decision making. This affects their livelihoods and realisation of their rights. The PWLP is structured to effectively support program partners to confront and overcome these issues.



## OVERALL FINDINGS

The findings of the final evaluation affirm and extend the considerable progress reported by IWDA and partners against the five program objectives.<sup>3</sup> Substantial efforts have been made across the program to test the most effective pathways for strengthening women's civil and political empowerment and progressing gender equality in Pacific contexts. Building blocks previously developed by partners have been strengthened in order to enhance effective approaches to women's empowerment. Partners have also built new foundations that can support their work beyond 2015. Consolidating these foundations has seen positive changes for women, groups and communities, partner and other organisations, and movements. Informed by lessons relating to these experiences, including building on or adjusting strategies and approaches as needed, IWDA and partners are well-positioned to shape and advance future work.

The program has made significant progress on a number of levels in a relatively short time as a "program in progress". Working with eight partners in three diverse countries to implement locally-appropriate activities that advance women's civil and political empowerment presents a level of complexity beyond usual program management. The developmental foundations laid through the PWLP are critically important for ongoing work on women's leadership and gender equality

in the Pacific. Furthermore, they provide a basis for strengthening strategic program cohesion in the future, irrespective of the funding sources.

Social change processes take time, particularly those directed at the promotion of gender equality in challenging contexts. Being realistic about the time needed to see change is essential. The program created by IWDA and partners has been in place since 2012. Some partners have been engaged in the program for the full four years while one had ceased and others have come on board in the last two years. This is a short timeframe in terms of tackling the complex and deeply challenging process of advancing gender equality. For this reason, the program is best viewed as emergent or a "program in progress," which is testing the pathways needed to bring about sustainable change in specific contexts.



Barbara Tanne Executive Director of BWF and Agnes Titus participating in the 2015 FLOW Retreat in Cairns. Photo Credit: Marta Jasinska

3. International Women's Development Agency. 2014. FLOW Progress Report 2014. Melbourne: International Women's Development Agency.

# OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

## WHAT HAS WORKED WELL?

### Growing Women's Leadership Efforts

PWLP participants expressed a high level of appreciation for the program and the value it added to their work. This includes assisting in the establishment of new organisations, and supporting partners to continue existing work and implement new work that would not otherwise have been possible. It also enabled activities for emerging women's networks and coalitions. Together, this support has enhanced the development of women's leadership work across the region.

Participants valued the opportunities to participate in PWLP training and other learning processes. This enabled individuals to build personal confidence and to more actively participate in the development of their communities. The PWLP created spaces for young women and older women to reflect and develop, enabling them to take up new roles and responsibilities in their communities, groups, organisations, and networks.

In Fiji, the PWLP has enabled program partners to significantly contribute to the Constitution writing process, to contribute to a 35% increase in the number of women candidates, and to assist in the election of eight women in the country's first national elections since the coup d'état in 2006.

## CASE STUDY

### WRAM Organisational Development and International Advocacy

The Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM) was formed in 2012 in response to a lack of informed and coordinated lobbying by the community for political and legislative change to support gender equality in the Solomon Islands. The nine founding members (seven women, two men) formed a Board of Management in 2012 and developed a constitution for the organisation. WRAM is a not-for-profit organisation advocating for the advancement of human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination by seeking accountability from duty bearers.

WRAM's partnership with IWDA was formed through the PWLP in 2013. Since then, the organisation's capacity has been significantly strengthened through a new strategic plan and through support with financial management systems and the recruitment of staff.

This partnership has meant that WRAM is stronger in carrying out advocacy work, holding the government to account, and has a more significant presence across the Pacific region and networks.

WRAM has been able to advocate for increased adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the Solomon Islands Government, taking a leading role in the CEDAW Shadow Reporting process, with a consortium of 12 women's NGOs in Solomon Islands. Here WRAM, together with the Solomon Islands National Council of Women (NCW), coordinated the compilation and finalisation of a report prepared by NGOs.

WRAM's Board Secretary was nominated to represent WRAM in the NGO delegation to Geneva to present the report to the United Nations CEDAW Committee, and she shared a leading role with a NCW representative in preparing the NGO delegation to present the Oral Statement. In 2015, WRAM intends to keep the Solomon Islands Government accountable to their commitments under CEDAW by advocating for the implementation of the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations.

WRAM has also undertaken successful advocacy at a national level in the Solomon Islands. In 2014, WRAM facilitated an information dissemination and training session to broaden the knowledge of journalists and media personnel on domestic violence and the Family Protection Act (FPA). Following the training, two major newspapers highlighted domestic violence and the FPA in their publications. One newspaper, *Sunday Isles*, also started a women's magazine that focusses only on women's issues as a result of the training. Of IWDA's support to WRAM their outgoing Board Chair Rose Martin said:

**"It is great to have an organisation like IWDA providing support to WRAM because they really know us and what our objectives are, they are flexible and responsive to our needs.**

**The unique thing about this support is that it's geared towards supporting newly established organisations like WRAM, whereas the other funding opportunities would only look at well-established organisations to fund. Without IWDA we wouldn't have been able to achieve all the things we've achieved so far."**

## Supporting Change Processes for Women's Leadership

Participants offered many and varied perspectives on change in women's leadership. This is consistent with the program's engagement with diverse participants and approach of trialling different ways to bring about positive change in women's participation and leadership. Significant progress has been made in creating spaces for young and older women, and some men, to participate in leadership development processes that facilitate strong independent learning. This has been highly valued by participants. This response reflects and supports IWDA's theory of change, which sees the development of women as confident individuals who participate in decision-making as key to sustaining progress on women's rights and gender equality.



Partners have also developed leadership approaches that take account of the family, group and community contexts in which individuals live. This is important in ensuring that individual change and empowerment can be fully realised.

PWLP's partner, BWF, worked with women political candidates who included Josephine Getsi. Getsi contested an open seat in the 2015 Bougainville General Election and was successful, becoming the first women to ever win an open seat. Getsi took part in workshops run by BWF, including the leadership training for intending candidates and two mock parliament trainings.



Coordinators of the GIRLS Theatre Program Mamta Chand, Bronwyn Tilbury (IWDA Pacific Program Manager), Filomena Tuivanualevu, and Maraia Tabunakawai. Photo credit: Kristy Nowland

## CASE STUDY

### GIRLS Theatre Program

In 2014, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement's (FWRM) GIRLS (Grow Inspire Relate Lead Succeed) Theatre Program worked with 49 girls between 10-13yrs old, from 16 different schools around Suva, Fiji.

This diverse group of girls came together across ethnic, socio-economic and religious lines to develop a play based on their own experiences of living in Fiji as a girl child. The Program was part of the wider FWRM Young Women and Leader Programme's theme of Political Participation and Awareness.

The aim of the Program was to encourage girls to express their opinions and thoughts at an early age, so they grow to be more confident and articulate advocates for their rights as women.

Through the use of interactive and fun learning activities, non-competitive theatre sports and community storytelling, the girls shared their personal stories of gender discrimination, bullying and peer pressure. These stories were then dramatised by the group using small re-enactments. A final script was developed from these true stories called

### "A Series of Unfortunate Events - Fiji Style".

Through a process of 12 rehearsals over six months, the girls developed the play, as well as their confidence, voices and friendships. The GIRLS Theatre Program went on to perform to packed houses for the six public performances of their play.

Two of the GIRLS from the program have been named as head girls at their schools and have credited their involvement in the GIRLS program with enabling them to carry out their roles effectively.

Sereima (12 years old) participated in the GIRLS Theatre Program in 2013 and 2014. She said the safe space created during rehearsals had boosted her confidence and helped her develop leadership skills and an ability to lead by example to her peers:

"I am a very shy girl. The GIRLS Program have really empowered myself that I can do anything.

The program have really helped me gained my confidence and has helped with my public speaking."



## Building Strong Women's Networks and Spaces

The PWLP has strengthened the work of a cohort of women's organisations in relation to three domains of leadership development, organisational capacity development and movement building. The partners share a common commitment to advancing and defending women's rights. Through the program they have created spaces for women of all ages to develop a sense of agency through leadership development, as well as to promote and advocate for women's rights. Furthermore, these spaces provide the opportunity to take collective action to influence local, national and international policy, and governance processes.

In 2014, five PWLP partners were involved in over 23 coalitions, committees and reference groups. They were called on repeatedly in 2014 by national governments and international bodies to attend events and provide expert advice and recommendations from the perspective of Pacific women's NGOs.

## Building Partnerships as Assets of Change

The PWLP strengthened partnerships at a number of levels: developing and reinforcing links, understandings, experiences, and networks, which will continue to be an ongoing resource for change. The program also enabled deeper investment by IWDA in relationships and supporting architecture with individual partners, in doing so providing opportunities for partners to develop their own connections outside of IWDA. Both levels of partnership development – IWDA-to-partner and partner-to-partner – are strong assets; exchanging experiences and using lessons are a powerful catalyst for change. Effective partner development has been critical to the program's success. IWDA has worked to ensure that partner relationships are respectful and reciprocal. One partner remarked:

**"...if IWDA is asking me for something I am of the spirit that I want to do it; I don't have this with other donors. IWDA is responsive and understands the situation of the work and family, staff and clients."**

## CASE STUDY

### Fiji Women's Forum

The Fiji Women's Forum (FWF) is made up of four established women's organisations: the National Council of Women (NCW), Soqosoqo Vakamarama I Taukei, FemLINKPACIFIC and FWRM, who came together in 2012 as co-convening organisations of the FWF. The partnership allows members to share their resources and expertise, and to encourage their

constituencies to have a greater collective voice. Over the life of the PWLP, FWF has developed into a formidable group of women who have gone on to influence the state and other power holders on the future of Fiji.

The FWF has enabled women at local and national levels to learn more about current and proposed political changes, enabled the development of key positions and demands for women, and amplified women's collective voices and proposals regarding the Constitution, elections and politics at national level. Losana Tuiraviravi, the Fiji Women's Forum Coordinator, expands on how the network cooperates in order to achieve shared goals:

**"We wanted to get to a place where we could work together despite our differences... For me, through the years, I've actually seen the changes in the individual co-convenors."**

**"When we have our meetings people talk about their views. When there needs to be clarity, they ask questions; the space also allows us to disagree, if we need to disagree."**

Five FWF meetings have been held over the life of the PWLP. Each of these brought together more than 50 women from the four organisations. Women attending were very diverse in age groups, ethnic backgrounds, place of residence (urban and rural), sexual orientation, identity, beliefs and values.

The meetings focussed on respect for human rights; defining the role of the Security Forces; promoting women's participation in decision-making and democratisation processes (including Temporary Special Measures for increased representation of women in the national parliament); promoting a rights-based, respectful, open and participatory constitution-making process; and on women's participation in local government as a new area of work for the FWF.

Achievements of the forum include women putting forward key proposals in submissions to the Constitutional Review Committee, coordinating civic education work with community members, arranging candidate training and de-briefing of women who stood as candidates in the 2014 national elections, and, through FemLINKPACIFIC, enabling women's voices to be heard in media productions of various kinds, including on radio and television.

## Shared Commitment to Change

While the genesis and history of the PWLP partnerships vary, a unifying characteristic is the shared commitment of partners to advance gender equality through transformative change processes. Not all partners identify as feminist organisations, but all have been more than willing to collaborate with IWDA, and each other, to promote change in women's leadership, and civil and political participation.



This shared commitment to change is reflected in ways of working and modalities of engagement. Much of the PWLP involved fostering an enabling environment for partners to implement a diverse range of activities that reflect their priorities. Capturing the value of such work can be difficult for evaluators. The day-to-day support provided to partners who are undertaking complex and demanding work within their communities is often vital to enabling success and can be time consuming. However, when support is provided by a partner from within the same movement for change, experiences are shared and capacity is developed.

This way of working and approach to partnership is difficult to capture with formal measurement and evaluation. The extent and value of this work is what it has enabled. PWLP partners are supported to develop and consolidate organisational systems and processes, which will continue to deliver benefits beyond the PWLP. In many instances, this has enabled partners to leverage additional funding to support program work.

## CASE STUDY

### Local Level Government Twinning Visits

In 2014, the PWLP supported three 'Twinning Visits', where governmental bodies from different jurisdictions met to share ideas and concepts. The PWLP brought together local government from Solomon Islands and Bougainville, as well as local councils in Australia. The City of Whittlesea, in Melbourne, travelled to Buka, Bougainville; representatives of Maribyrnong City Council (also in Melbourne) travelled to Honiara in the Solomon Islands; and Honiara City Council and Guadalcanal Provincial Government visited Maribyrnong City Council.

The Twinning Visits offered an opportunity to share best practice approaches and innovation, and to develop relationships and peer-to-peer networks within the participating local governments. The partnership visit between Maribyrnong City Council, Honiara City Council and Guadalcanal Provincial Government

focussed on peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange, as well as exploring leading local practices and innovations in gender equity — ranging from organisational policy to local economic development, to women's health and VAW prevention strategies. Honiara and Guadalcanal Local Government staff found it useful to attend a Council Meeting at Maribyrnong City Council to see local democracy in action, and the experience gave them insight into what should and should not be happening in their respective councils. Delegates gained a better understanding of how local government can influence gender equity outcomes and prevent VAW. One delegate from the Solomon Islands noted:

**"I was so inspired to see a good number of women in the management level within Maribyrnong City Council. This is very encouraging and motivating."**

The Twinning Visits have also enabled ongoing communication between council delegates. For example, since the Twinning Visit, there has been dialogue between Buka and Whittlesea staff. The strong relationship that was built will promote ongoing learning and support.

The Twinning Visits enabled the opportunity for sharing best practices. For example, Whittlesea staff shared codes of conduct and sexual harassment policies — Buka Urban Council has since developed a draft Code of Conduct for Councillors and a Sexual Violence Policy and procedure to support its 'Workplace Harassment Policy'. Buka Urban Council then shared this with Whittlesea (and CLGF) for feedback.

Participating in the exchanges has led to the development of new initiatives within Solomon Islands and Bougainville local governments. After the visit to Maribyrnong, delegates said:

**"I want to establish a social network with female council workers for a start with a social network committee on gender equity and gender based violence. The same committee will also be responsible for promoting social wellbeing and healthy lifestyles and cervical screening and breast cancer awareness within the council."**

**"I see the need for holding more open consultations with communities in the regional centres in Guadalcanal Province before formulating our annual work plans."**

## An Emergent Network

The latter part of the program has seen a deliberate strategy to connect partners to work independently of IWDA as a focal point of partnership. PWLP partners have begun to engage with each other, including through staff exchanges and the engagement of all partners in PWLP retreats. One partner indicated that in the last six months of the program they have perceived a “shift away from IWDA being a central point to being a network”. This illustrates the value of investment in fostering partnerships, which are based on an understanding of feminist approaches, respect, trust, and mutual accountability.



## Working Successfully with Complexity

Strengthening partnerships and networks for change across three countries brings complexity. This is particularly true when working to advance women’s civil and political leadership in the Pacific, where significant and intersecting factors inhibit change across multiple spaces. Operational challenges associated with such a program add to the complexity. The substantive achievements of the PWLP are particularly significant given this context and the nature of the program’s objectives.

The evaluation found that many positive outcomes have been achieved through the diverse activities supported by the program. IWDA and partners have implemented an ambitious program, with multiple facets, in a relatively short timeframe. Clear and significant successes have been achieved, including strengthening the foundations for future change.

## Flexible and Responsive Program Management

The PWLP was delivered in a creative and flexible way to fund work prioritised by partners, continuing existing approaches and supporting new work for some partners. The PWLP also worked strategically to bridge funding gaps and complement funding from other sources. IWDA and its partners particularly valued the flexibility allowed by the FLOW funding mechanism to utilise foreign

exchange gains, which enabled increased resourcing to some activities including communicating work implemented throughout the program.

The flexible way in which the program was managed allowed scope for partners to make multi-year plans and to trial new approaches in a way that is not always possible through grant-based funding. This meant partners were able to test and learn from new or innovative strategies which is important for long-term sustainable change.

During 2014, 15 women from PWLP partner organisations and networks around the Pacific attended and participated in eight regional preparatory meetings and forums.

## Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The program emphasised the implementation and monitoring of projects developed by individual partners. This emphasis, in turn, formed a platform for monitoring the overall progress of the project. It also created challenges for drawing out the learning, achievements and effectiveness of change processes over time, across the program as a whole.

Annual partner retreats have been a key focus for shared learning and reflection, and a significant contributor to the speed and ease in which partners across the region have come together. In part, this aims to address a perennial challenge for large and diverse programs: ensuring that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Collaborative reflection and learning is a critical element of this process.

The relevant development literature notes the limitations in building, monitoring and evaluating a robust evidence base in relation to women’s leadership development.<sup>4</sup> Irrespective of the shape of future programs, further positive gains will be made through ongoing evaluation, in which long-term monitoring enables clear assessment and testing of strategies, allowing adjustments to be made to programs. The long-term and complex nature of change in this area lends itself to an approach emphasising reflection and iterative improvement, as well as the strengthening of data collection, which can then be compared against mid-term goals and outcomes.

4. Kenway, Lokot & Bradley. 2014. Women’s Leadership: Evidence Review. Canberra: Office of Development Effectiveness, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## STRENGTHENING FUTURE PRACTICE

Specific considerations to strengthen future practice are detailed in each section of the evaluation report. Overarching considerations are summarised here.

### Partnership

Continue to strengthen and articulate IWDA's feminist partnership approach, and clarify the principles, values and assumptions that underpin it. Improve the processes and systems needed to effectively put this approach into practice in collaboration with partners.

### Women's Leadership

Develop a strategic "whole of program" conception of transformative leadership (for women and men), stating what this means for advancing changes in women's civil and political empowerment. This should be broken down to individual, relational and structural levels, all drawing on the collective perspectives and experiences of program partners. Expand work on leadership development approaches that take account of wider family, group, and community contexts, as part of continuing to promote the structural changes required to progress gender equality in household, community and institutional settings.

### Organisational Capacity Development

Build on organisational capacity development tools to produce a program-wide organisational capacity development framework. This framework would enable flexible and responsive approaches to partners, guiding the identification and tracking of the change processes

needed to support and strengthen women's organisations in advancing women's leadership in the Pacific.



### Movement Building

Further strengthen the sense of shared identity among partners in future multi-partner, multi-country programs as a way to realise potential program-level synergies. Continue to work with partners to strengthen the understanding and utilisation of movement building (and its links to leadership and organisational capacity development), as well as the implications of collectivised organisation and strategising, in order to influence duty bearers and communities towards transformative change in gender equality.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Enhancing our understanding of what best supports the development of women's leadership for transformative change will enrich practice and insight within the area of women's civil and political empowerment. Ongoing evaluation and reflection by both IWDA and partners will strengthen the change processes used in-program to advance women's leadership. Stronger and more systematic program-wide monitoring and evaluation will enhance collective learning and program improvement.



Miriam Rees and Losana Tuiraviravi participating in the 2015 FLOW Retreat in Cairns. Photo Credit: Marta Jasinska



# IWDA'S INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE EVALUATION

Since the evaluation was completed, IWDA finalised its Principles for International Program Partnerships, and is continuing to work on building a capacity framework for partner strengthening. Monitoring and evaluation of internal systems and staffing will be promoted in subsequent program designs and investments.

IWDA continues to develop its role as an enabler and catalyst in movement building, and its understanding of how this varies across partners and contexts. IWDA recognises that to better understand how change happens, and how IWDA can best contribute to and accelerate this change, is to work with research partners to support the production of documentation and data. This approach has been incorporated in subsequent program designs.

As this evaluation summary was finalised, IWDA was advised that its follow-on program, Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE), submitted to the FLOW 2 funding mechanism was successful. Recommendations from this evaluation will be addressed as part of detailed implementation planning for the WAVE program which will be implemented in five countries with 16 program partners.



Sister Lorraine Garasu, Barbara Tanne and Sepesa Sigatokacake Rasili participating in the 2015 FLOW Retreat in Cairns. Photo Credit: Marta Jasinska



# FINAL PROGRAM EVALUATION APPROACH

The final evaluation is a significant source for this overview. This section provides brief information about the method of evaluation.

The evaluation was framed to contribute to future programs by IWDA and partner organisations that promote women's leadership and civic and political empowerment in the Pacific. Its focus was formative, emphasising program learning, strengths and areas for improvement, and increasing understanding of processes of change. The central purpose of the evaluation was: are we making progress, and how can we do better?

The evaluation used a qualitative design with participatory and learning-based approaches. This included interviews, small group discussions, workshops, and reflections with staff and board members of partner organisations and program participants. The evaluation approach aimed to:

- Draw out and understand the diversity of experiences and views of those who have been involved in the program;
- Draw on individual and collective knowledge; and
- Promote reflection and learning among key stakeholders to make sense of program achievements and processes.

## THE RATIONALE

The formative evaluation approach was guided by the nature of the current program, the intention of the PWLP to bring about transformative change and to be responsive and learning oriented, and the literature relating to women's leadership development.

The international literature highlights the multi-faceted nature of change in making progress towards gender equality and the need for multiple strategies at multiple levels that are responsive and appropriate to the local context. Given the complexity and interconnectedness

of this work, it is generally recognised that program outputs may contribute to more than one objective, and the work and success of one initiative is often reliant on the work and success of other programs.<sup>5</sup>

IWDA's FLOW progress report to the Netherlands Government in late 2014 highlighted substantial achievements against a backdrop of challenging contextual issues. Progress against outputs in the logframe was reported to be tracking well, with the expectation that these would be fully achieved by the end of the program in December 2015. The formative evaluation provided scope to go beyond consideration of program outputs to examine the change processes that lead to the achievement of outcomes. This also provided the potential to identify unexpected or unplanned outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation of women's leadership development is often limited. The evaluation provided the opportunity for IWDA and partners to reflect more deeply on understanding the change processes needed to consolidate and shape future work. Lessons learned in this area will enable IWDA and partners to frame programs that make a valuable contribution to the knowledge base regarding transformative change in relation to women's civil and political empowerment.

### Three Domains of Change

A conceptual model was developed for the evaluation which was based on PWLP program documents as well as on international literature on three domains of change (leadership development, organisational capacity development, and movement building). The model focussed on the interrelated nature of these three domains of change and their significance for advancing women's political and civil empowerment. In addition, the model resonated with IWDA and partners and was seen as relevant to the work of all PWLP partners, recognising their different emphases.



Miriam Rees and Pionie Boso participating in the 2015 FLOW Retreat in Cairns. Photo Credit: Marta Jasinska



Miriam Rees, Sister Lorraine Garasu and Losana Tuiraviravi participating in the 2015 FLOW Retreat in Cairns. Photo Credit: Marta Jasinska

5. FLOW Progress Report 2014, p. 5.

The tentative theory of change guiding the conceptual model and the program is: transformative leadership development opportunities for women are expected to underpin the development of capable and effective women's organisations. This in turn is important and necessary for collaboration and development of women's and other movements for social change. Progress in one domain can facilitate positive contributions or enable further change in other domains. Likewise, limitations in one domain may constrain what is possible in other domains. Given their nature and roles in promoting gender equality, there is movement and interconnection between and among these domains.

### Facilitating Changes in Women's Leadership

The conceptual model enabled the evaluators to consider the change processes underpinning the work of the PWLP, as well as its strengths and challenges. It has the potential to add a further dimension to the extensive work undertaken by IWDA and program partners to report on the achievements of the program against its objectives.

Key evaluation questions were given to IWDA and partners to examine the three domains, monitoring and evaluation results, and the value of the program. Data collection captured perspectives of IWDA and partner staff, and women and men involved in program activities. The aim of such evaluation was to identify the connections between the program's activities and strategies, and the intended outcomes and changes.

Information gathered through "Most Significant Change" stories and other participatory processes confirmed the evaluators' assumptions, supported by the literature, that understanding the dynamic interplay across the three domains (leadership development, organisational capacity development and movement building) is important to facilitate desired changes in women's civil and political participation and leadership.



Lilly BeSoer, Agnes Titus, Sister Lorraine Garasu and Sophie Kilipi participating in the 2015 FLOW Retreat in Cairns. Photo Credit: Marta Jasinska

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