IWDA STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING REPORT 2020-2021

JANUARY 2022

Contents

Executive Summary

Purpose

Financial year 2020-21 represents the first year of programming under IWDA's *Strategic Plan 2020-2023*; a Plan which clearly differentiates between IWDA's contribution and the work of the Women's Rights Organisations that we fund and support. This Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Report is an opportunity to present responses to the key inquiry questions for year one as outlined in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, namely: To what extent have we delivered against our strategies or objectives? What outcomes were achieved? Where did we fall short, and why? And in light of these learnings, how will we adapt?

The report aims to present a succinct overview of the financial year with a strong utilisation focus: aiming to draw out the key learnings from our successes and challenges in order to influence our future implementation, to better understand the role we play, and to articulate the value we provide as a feminist movement actor, partner, and solidarity actor.

Methodology

The year one Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning process involved the analysis of headline indicator data and progress against the Operations Plan, and short, team-based reflection sessions triangulated with information from external sources via stakeholder and partner perception reviews.

Question 1: To what extent have we delivered against our strategies?

Financial year 2020-21 has been a year of significant external challenges caused by COVID 19, and internal complexities as a result of non-renewal of the Netherlands WAVE grant funding, the restructure of the Partnerships Team, and the impact on individuals, and organisational culture, due to both lockdowns and the negative experiences of some women of colour at IWDA.

Despite this, all teams at IWDA have succeeded in making progress against the new Strategic Plan. Of the 43 deliverables in the financial year 2020-21 Operational Plan across IWDA's five strategies, only two were not completed: the online platform to support remote advocacy and convening *Plan Your Power* has been cancelled (objective 1.3); and the collection and use of Equality Insights data by stakeholders in Solomon Islands and Tonga (objective 2.1) was delayed until financial year 2021-22.

Question 2: What outcomes were achieved?

Before exploring the key outcomes achieved in FY20-21 it is important to recognise the significant shift which occurred with IWDA's year one Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan.

Goal 1: Resource and contribute to resilient and vibrant feminist movements, primarily in the areas of: power leadership and civic space; freedom from violence; and gendered climate justice	
Strategy One: We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with	**Money:** Flexible funds to program partners was found to be pivotal in enabling partners to be responsive to local events. **Skills:** IWDA's most impactful support to partners, as voiced by partners themselves, was identified across three key categories: financial, project design and project implementation. Such support helped partners achieve international standards and resulted in "open[ing] up doors for other

money, skills, and access	donors to come in" (Interviewee, IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021). **Access:** IWDA provided access in terms of 'connecting the dots from global to local' and encouraging partners to participate in activities such as Generation Equality Forum.
Strategy Two: We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality	IWDA played a leadership role on the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition Six on Feminist Movements and Leadership. Engagement in this fora has strengthened IWDA's profile in the international arena and relationships have been strengthened.
Goal 2: Promote systemic change towards gender equality for all	
Strategy Three: We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation	The innovation of the Equality Insights measure has become very apparent this year, and has been able to engage more with feminist movements and the practice of 'building constituencies'. IWDA's research on feminist foreign policy produced significant outputs which created new relationships with civil society and government feminist foreign policy advocates.
Strategy Four: We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence	IWDA used our locational power to increase calls for action to address issues affecting women and Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) in our region, including stronger action by Australia in response to the military coup in Myanmar, increased resources for the response and recovery from COVID-19, and increased resourcing of WROs..
Goal 3: Build a resilient and relevant feminist organisation	
Strategy Five: We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice	IWDA achieved increased organisational sustainability both through its 'everyday excellence' of meeting its projected income targets and by also embarking on new innovations on income generation and re-thinking our role in terms of partnerships. IWDA embarked on an ambitious and challenging journey in terms of its own diversity and inclusion which incorporated significant formal structural changes in terms of its Board and policies; and organisational 'norms' change in terms of anti-racism, decolonisation, and disability inclusion.

Question 3: Where did we fall short, and why?

A resounding sentiment from across the organisation was that not only was 'business as usual' maintained, but an **impressive agenda of new work was delivered despite the challenging context**. IWDA reflected that not as much progress was made as hoped on cross-team and systems changes, progressing climate justice work, revitalising staff performance support, and establishing different and flexible funding models.

Through IWDA's organisational reflection processes, thematic challenges emerged for why IWDA was not able to advance all areas as initially planned:

- As to be expected, disruptions resulting from **COVID-19** was a significant barrier identified by all teams.
- Resource constraints was also a common feature across teams, both in terms of **team staffing and financial resourcing**. Staff turnover was perhaps the most significant issue.
- **Silos and issues of power** within the organisation were identified across teams, particularly within teams with internal-facing roles such as Business Transformations and Finance.
- The **internal focused and emotionally-challenging work of financial year 2020-21**, in terms of the diversity and inclusion work and accreditation; and the thought leadership represented by decolonisation, strategic monitoring, evaluation and learning, knowledge translation, and movement strengthening; has had an impact on the thinking space and emotional energy across the organisation.
- **I**nformation and data was an emerging category of challenge across the organisation, related to funding cycle gaps, time constraints and technological issues.

Question 4: In light of these learnings, how will we adapt?

IWDA's key achievements and outcomes have been analysed using the 3s Framework to explore where IWDA has successfully been able to 'Step Up', 'Stand With' and 'Step Back' in relation to our partners, fellow movement actors, allies, and stakeholders. As the facilitated reflections were underway, the benefit of viewing the 3s framework from an internal standpoint to better understand how teams stand in relation to their colleagues and relationships *within* IWDA, became apparent and has been adopted in the presentation of results. Learnings have therefore been categorised into two key areas: an increased understanding of the role we play in our partnerships and external relationships, and areas identified for internal change, in the words of our stakeholders, to "explore how to be the next best version of [ourselves]" (Interviewee, IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.1.)

> **Roles IWDA plays with others:**
>
> **Stepping Up:**
> - Thought leadership and knowledge
> - feminist and decolonising practice and approach to partnership
>
> **Standing With:**
> - Resource mobilisation and flexibility
> - using our locational power to amplify the voice of partners, and approach to accompaniment and solidarity
>
> **Stepping Back:**
> -Respect for others' knowledge and skills, including giving up power and control, or 'holding space' for others

Proposed learnings for internal change include:

- A recognition of the importance of finding the time and space to **foster cross team connections**, nurture our internal relationships, and better understand our respective work
- **Resolving resourcing issues** and defining appropriate priorities within available resources

- Further **strengthening external relationships** and developing more nuanced knowledge of our partners
- Continuing to refine and adapt our **organisational systems**
- To grow in confidence **our voice in articulating our organisational identity**.

Next Steps

Prior to finalisation, IWDA's Board engaged with the findings and adaptation actions arising from the MEL process. Key questions posed to the Board included:
- From the reflections in the body of this report, and from CEO Reports to the Board, what are emerging for you as the **key barriers** to the organisational achievement of the strategic plan?
- From your own areas of expertise, what do you see as the most impactful actions IWDA could take to **increase the value of our contribution** when we 'step up' or 'stand with' women's rights organisations and movement actors in solidarity?

Common themes emerged from across the Board and Leadership groups regarding both barriers and insights, and have been structured into three key categories of change: staff resources, financial resources, and opportunities for external influence.

The opportunity to bring our Board member voices into discussions of our work - our challenges, successes and next steps – has contributed new perspectives, increased the richness of our insight, and achieved one of the key objectives of strategic monitoring, evaluation and learning: evidence-based decision-making.

The planned year three evaluative activities will be an opportunity to further build our understanding of IWDA's achievements, to challenge whether the strategies employed are the right ones, to test the assumptions underpinning our plan, and to address questions posed by our partners and stakeholders about IWDA's future role. In the meantime, as succinctly communicated by our partners, 'If you keep trying to do better, that means you care and that's what matters' (IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p,13.)
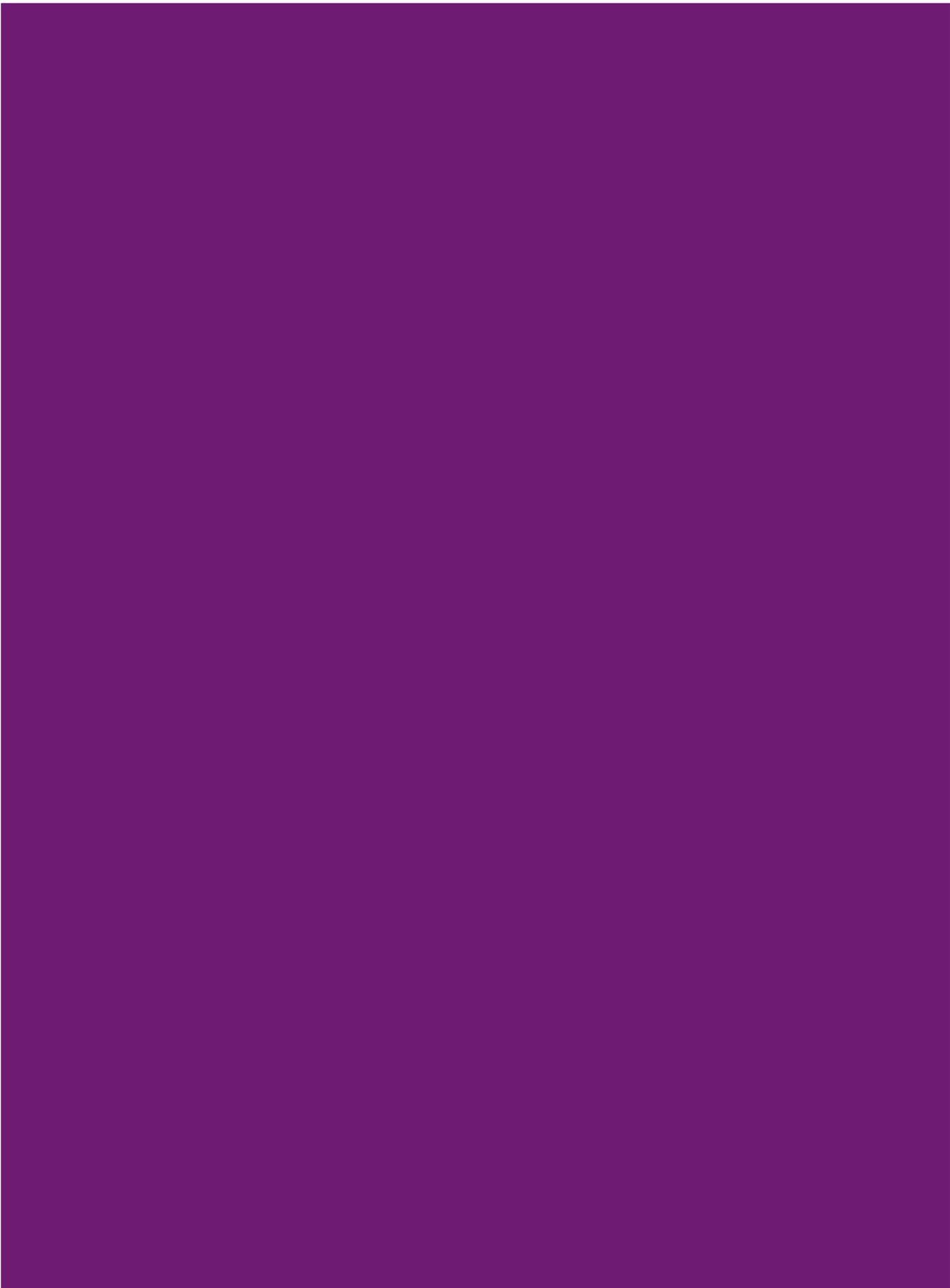
IWDA STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING REPORT 2020-2021

Purpose

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> Box A – Evaluative Questions
> Question 1: To what extent have we delivered against our strategies or objectives?
> Question 2: What outcomes were achieved?
> Question 3: Where did we fall short, and why?
> Question 4: In light of these learnings, how will we adapt?

The report aims to present a succinct overview of the financial year with a strong utilisation focus: aiming to draw out the key learnings from our successes and challenges in order to influence our future implementation, to better understand the role we play, and to articulate the value we provide as a feminist movement actor, partner, and solidarity actor.

Methodology

The year one MEL process involved the analysis of quantitative headline indicator data and progress against the Operations Plan, and short, team-based reflection sessions triangulated with information from external sources via stakeholder and partner perception reviews. Initial analysis of the reflection sessions was performed by a cross-team MEL Core Group and was sense-checked at an all staff session in September 2021. The Board engaged with the draft report in their February 2022 meeting to provide strategic input to the proposed adaptations arising from our organisational learning.

Limitations include lack of planned budget for MEL activities requiring rapid allocation of an underspend and participation of the Core MEL group was reduced to only four of seven members due to a last-minute priority activity to consider a new partnership. A decision was taken to limit all staff engagement to a short 60-minute session due to high workloads and fatigue from an ambitious schedule of organisational change and training, however this didn't allow sufficient opportunity to both outline the breadth of accomplishments and promote detailed input. Despite these limitations, the session elicited strong turn-out from across teams and was well-received, particularly in terms of staff interpreting our work using the 3s Framework, namely how IWDA 'steps up', 'stands with' and steps back' in our relationships with others,[1] and to promote organisational cohesion. It is recommended that future sessions are 90 minutes.

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[1] "Step Up, Stand With, Step Back" is an adaptation of the framework proposed by Shirley Walters and Shauna Butterwick in their 2017 publication *Moves to Decolonise Solidarity Through Feminist Popular Education.*

Question 1: To what extent have we delivered against our strategies?

Financial year 20-21 has been a year of significant external challenges caused by COVID 19, and internal complexities as a result of non-renewal of the Netherlands WAVE grant funding, the restructure of the Partnerships Team, and the impact on individuals, and organisational culture, due to both lockdowns and the negative experiences of some women of colour at IWDA.

Despite this, all teams at IWDA have succeeded in making progress against the new Strategic Plan. Of the 43 deliverables in the FY20-21 Operational Plan across IWDA's five strategies, only two were not completed: the online platform to support remote advocacy and convening *Plan Your Power* has been cancelled (objective 1.3); and the collection and use of Equality Insights data by stakeholders in Solomon Islands and Tonga (objective 2.1) was delayed until FY21-22.

A snapshot of key quantitative data for each of the five strategies is included below, including the annual targets when available, and qualitative examples of outcomes achieved under each goal is included in Section 2. See Annex A for the collated headline indicators for FY20-21 as outlined in the Strategic Plan MEL Framework.

Strategy One: We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with money, skills, and access

- IWDA exceeded its target for funds released to diverse women's rights organisations; $4.537m released (target $4.5m), supporting 27 women's organisations.
- 4,547 donors (individual and philanthropy) contributed $1.65m in funding, with 12 offering multi-year funding.
- 42 accompaniment activities were delivered to IWDA partners

Strategy Two: We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality

- 22 convenings were supported, including training delivered by JASS (Just Associates) with WAVE funds, the launch of the IWDA Plan your Power toolkit, Feminist Futures workshops delivered by IWDA, and virtual dialogues and workshops with groups such as Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, Triennial Conference Pacific Women, and Research for Development Impact Network (RDI).

Strategy Three: We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation

- 53 knowledge products were produced, including an IWDA statement of evidence to the Parliamentary hearing on Myanmar, *From Seeds to Roots: Trajectories towards feminist foreign policy*, a publication on feminist participatory action research, and IWDA Frameworks on Feminist Movement Strengthening and Knowledge Translation.
- 113 'uptake, use and advocacy activities' were conducted by IWDA, including public presentations, webinars, sectoral meetings, meetings with political advisors, and meetings with donors.

Strategy Four: We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence

- IWDA contributed to 12 multilateral forums such as Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Generation Equality Forum (GEF, held across two events hosted by Mexico in March and France in June) and the Women 7 (W7) Summit ahead of the G7.
- 52 solidarity actions were supported by IWDA representing our efforts to 'stand with' and support the calls of Global South feminist movements, as well as gender equality issues in

Australia, across a broad range of issues including: Generation Equality Forum collective commitments on issues such as increased funding for feminist movements, a Gender & Environment Data Alliance, and to implement feminist practices in our organisations; and IWDA signed up as a founding member of the Global Partner Network for Feminist Foreign Policy and the Global Alliance for Sustainable Feminist Movements.

Strategy Five: We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice

- 20 tied funders supported IWDA's work, providing $7,319, 419 of new funding, and the number of regular givers was 1,248, just short of the 1300 target. This is a strong show of support for IWDA's work in a context of economic uncertainty for many Australians and can be attributed to the strong performance by the Fundraising and Grants Teams who delivered 613, 876 supporter engagements and exceeded their overall fundraising income target.
- 14 of 39 (36%) IWDA staff identify as Women of Colour,[2] and 1 staff member identifies as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. 42% of IWDA staff were born overseas, from 19 cultural backgrounds, speaking 12 languages.
- 8% of IWDA staff identify as a woman with disabilities, just below the national Australian workforce average of 9.4%
- The median age of IWDA staff is 39 years.
- 97.3% of staff reported they were either 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their job, exceeding IWDA's target of 70% rate of employee satisfaction,[3] above the national Australian workforce average of 82.2%.
- At 30% the rate of employee internal fill was double the FY20-21 target and the rate of employee retention was 73%, just below the 75% target.

Question 2: What outcomes were achieved?

Before exploring the key outcomes achieved in FY20-21 it is important to recognise the significant shift which occurred with IWDA's year one Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning plan. As hoped, the IWDA reflection process more clearly differentiated between IWDA's work and that of the women's rights organisations we support, and as a result, referenced very few of the many partner achievements: high level examples of partner achievements have been summarised in Annex 2. The following examples are only a few of IWDA's many achievements, and have been chosen to bring to life the high-level quantitative information and show early outcomes against our Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: Resource and contribute to resilient and vibrant feminist movements, primarily in the areas of: power leadership and civic space; freedom from violence; and gendered climate justice

1 Strategy One: We resource diverse women's rights organisations, primarily in Asia and the Pacific, with money, skills, and access

Money: IWDA released $4.537m to 27 diverse women's rights organisations, utilised its Urgent Action Fund in PNG to support a family against sorcery accusations and to IWDA partner Akhaya in Myanmar

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[2]Four of ten (40%) of Board members identified as WoC; one of five (20%) of the leadership team identified as WoC; three of 13 (23%) of the senior leadership group identified as WoC; nine of 20 (45%) remaining staff identified as WoC.

[3]A different definition of employee satisfaction was used for FY20-21 due to data coming from the Inclusion@Work survey which uses 'overall, how satisfied are you with your job?' rather than the Employee Engagement Survey which asks participants the extent they agree/disagree with the statement 'all things considered, I believe this organisation is a great place to work'.

after the coup to support the safety of women's rights activists, and identified four new partners for the We Rise Coalition. IWDA's approach of providing sustained, flexible funds to program partners was found by an external evaluation to be **pivotal in enabling partners to be responsive to local events** (such as elections), and changes in context, such as the unfolding crisis of the novel coronavirus pandemic;[4] this finding was also voiced by partners in the FY20-21 Partner Perception Review. Partners noted that: "when we were under budget we were supported to come up with how we could reallocate it to other important and critical work"[5] and IWDA "assist[ed] with design and allocation of [our] budget line to be fully utilized by project",[6] in addition to providing extra 'support for things like personal protective equipment gear for staff and clients and other safety and communication requirements'.[7]

Skills: IWDA's most impactful support to partners, as voiced by partners themselves, was identified across three key categories: financial, project design and project implementation; and included "capacity building with narrative report writing", "ongoing training and mentoring to staff", and financial technical support which **helped partners achieve international standards** and resulted in **"open[ing] up doors for other donors to come in".**[8] Grant support, both in terms of identifying opportunities, proposal brokering, and developing proposals, helped secure new funding for partners. For example three partners, Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM) in Solomon Islands, United Sisterhood Alliance in Cambodia and Ta'ang Women's Organisation (TWO) in Myanmar, successfully applied for Catalyze Grants—the first round of grants through Canada's Equality Fund—for CAD 100,000, 80,000 and 60,000 respectively. In the case of TWO, who were not eligible without a Fiscal Sponsor, IWDA undertook the legal and organisational processes to be able to formally play that role and receive the funds on TWO's behalf, at the same time adding that capacity to the support we offer partners more broadly. After the coup in Myanmar, with partners facing a range of difficulties and dangers, IWDA worked for more than six months to safely and securely deliver the funds to TWO, checking with and closely consulting with the Equality Fund to ensure the security of all parties and processes.

Access: IWDA provided access in terms of 'connecting the dots from global to local'[9] and encouraging partners to participate in activities such as Generation Equality Forum;[10] and in terms of securing local expertise for organisational strengthening, particularly in Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands, which has been valued support for partners at a time when Program Managers have been unable to travel.[11]

2 Strategy Two: We support global and regional convening and strengthening of movements to advance gender equality

As part of IWDA's leadership role on the Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition 6 on Feminist Movements and Leadership, IWDA convened three consultations with feminist movements and women's rights organisations. The first was targeting participation by Pacific Feminists and was co-hosted with IWDA partner, DiVA for Equality Fiji. The second and third events were collaborations with the other civil society leaders on Action Coalition 6 targeting participation from global feminist

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[4] Final Evaluation Report, WAVE Program. https://iwda.org.au/resource/wave-endline-evaluation-final-report/
[5] Interviewee, IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.4.
[6] Interviewee, IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.4.
[7] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.9.
[8] Interviewees, IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.4.
[9] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.5.
[10] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.5.
[11] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.4.

movements. The objectives were to share information about Generation Equality and the Action Coalitions to equip movement actors to engage more substantially in the process; and also to gather feedback on the draft Action Coalition Blueprints so that we can amplify movement voices in our own spheres of influence. In addition to these real-time virtual convenings, IWDA also built a mailing list of 236 individual stakeholders from the Pacific and Asia region who we corresponded with regularly throughout the GEF process. Feedback from members of this group indicated that the level of consistent and transparent communications that IWDA was able to provide was valuable through the relatively opaque process that was the Generation Equality Forums. Engagement in AC6 has **strengthened IWDA's profile in the international arena** and relationships have been strengthened: with AC6 leaders which has helped IWDA being seen as a legitimate solidarity actor and useful and valuable member of global feminist spaces; with DFAT who have come to see IWDA as a more legitimate source of information on a global process they were seeking to better understand and reached out to IWDA for information on GEF; and with broader civil society as our role in AC6 raised our profile and legitimacy leading to new relationships and opportunities. IWDA was able to have a direct influence on the final AC6 Blueprint in terms of feminist resourcing, feminist foreign policy and individual-level gender sensitive poverty data. Internally, through our engagement in GEF, IWDA's Research, Policy and Advocacy team has also observed an increased coherence to our advocacy work. The Action Coalition and GEF Process has provided a way to tie other pieces of work (E.g. the Feminist Foreign Policy Research, or Feminist Movement Strengthening Framework) together and 'pin' these to the GEF process.

Goal 2: Promote systemic change towards gender equality for all

3 Strategy Three: We transform discourse on gender equality through knowledge creation and translation

The innovation of the Equality Insights measure has become very apparent this year as "an example of really rigorous research outside of academia,"[12] demonstrated by the level of external interest from the Global Technical Advisory Group (G-TAG) in supporting the methodological work: 17 experts were shortlisted, 15 responded and 14 very high calibre experts agreed to participate. There has been a lot of positive feedback on the quality of the Equality Insights work, and the G-TAG have been willing to bring in specialist expertise from within their organisations to further support quality and innovation. The Steering Committee model used by Equality Insights in the 2020 Solomon Islands IDM Study has also demonstrated the value of "building locally-owned initiatives"[13] and by being able to align Equality Insights with IWDA and leveraging IWDA's audiences means that Equality Insights has been able to **engage more with feminist movements and the practice of 'building constituencies'**. In an example of 'standing with' IWDA commissioned Oceanic feminist researcher and storyteller **'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki** to lead a piece of research entitled *Creating Equitable South-North Partnerships: Nurturing the Vā and voyaging the audacious ocean together*, published in October 2020. IWDA supported knowledge uptake by convening a webinar with partners, a public webinar, and sessions at external fora such as the Oceania Connect Conference, Oxfam Decolonising Practice Forum and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute public health network.

In another example, IWDA's research on feminist foreign policy (FFP) produced outputs such as a published research report, a parallel event at CSW, a presentation to the RDI Network Conference, and an article in *The Interpreter* and **created new relationships with civil society and government FFP advocates**. As a result, IWDA was invited to be a part of an advisory committee for a research grant exploring FFP pathways, and to participate in Canada's public consultation process towards

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[12] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

[13] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process

developing a FFP white paper (which included meetings with the Canadian Deputy High Commissioner to Australia in December and participation in the public consultation sessions). The research also provided a strong evidence base for IWDA's advocacy and influence going into FY21-22.

4 Strategy Four: We leverage our locational power for advocacy and influence

IWDA used our locational power to **increase calls for action to address issues affecting women and WROs in our region**, including stronger action by Australia in response to the military coup in Myanmar, increased resources for the response and recovery from COVID-19, and increased resourcing of Women's Rights Organisations, for example in influencing the design of the Australian Government's *Pacific Women Lead* Program. In support of Myanmar, IWDA contributed to collective advocacy calling on the Australian Government to take action in response to the coup. IWDA's Program Manger actively engaged in the Myanmar Campaign Network, a cross-sector network of Australian civil society organisations and Women Activists Myanmar (WAM), a group led by Myanmar diaspora women. IWDA attended and spoke at the parliamentary hearing on Myanmar, facilitated a meeting between the Women's League of Burma and an Australian Member of Parliament, published an article in collaboration with Sharmon Stone, the former Australian Ambassador for Women and Girls, and contributed resources for the creation of a Myanmar Campaigner Position to commence in early 2023. Collective advocacy initiatives contributed to: strong recommendations for action by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade; statements in parliament by cross-party MPs; strengthened relationships between Australian civil society and the Myanmar diaspora community; and a commitment by the Australian oil and gas company Woodside Energy to suspend operations in Myanmar. IWDA also looked for opportunities to change the ways multilateral groups operated, for example via its work with the Generation Equality Action Coalition on feminist movements and leadership coordinated by UN Women, by both pushing for a feminist lens to inform the way the Action Coalition worked and by seeking opportunities for broader engagement with women leaders from the Asia Pacific region to influence the design of the Global Acceleration Plan to reflect priorities from this region.

IWDA staff deliver Myanmar Statement to Australian Government Inquiry, 2021

Goal 3: Build a resilient and relevant feminist organisation

5 Strategy Five: We ensure our own organisational sustainability, wellbeing, diversity and feminist practice

IWDA achieved increased organisational sustainability both through its **'everyday excellence' of meeting its projected income targets** and by also embarking on new innovations on income generation and re-thinking our role in terms of partnerships. IWDA can celebrate that we exceeded our overall fundraising income target during a pandemic year: breaking an online income record in quarter four with over $273,000 donated online in June alone; and was named in the top 15 of Australia's Best Charities 2020 by The Good Cause co, achieving the highest 'Donate with Confidence' recommendation.[14] IWDA's innovative approach to generating income from our knowledge products

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[14] Board Report August 2020.

is advancing and an Advocacy Advisor will commence next year; this role will support the income generation trial ('Project Springboard') with a focus on generating income to support partners to implement IWDA's Plan Your Power toolkit.[15] Part of this role is funded by Foundation for a Just Society (FJS), and will also focus on advocacy accompaniment support to Cambodia and Myanmar partners under the MOVE program. IWDA also worked with partners to secure new funding in FY20-21 which incorporates IWDA in 'Advisor' or 'Fiscal Sponsor' roles. For example, IWDA partner Voice for Change secured two grants from UN Women Spotlight Initiative and will engage IWDA using our new advisor mode in a combined project addressing organisational strengthening and gender based violence response (project value USD230,000 with value for IWDA of AUD $107,327).

IWDA embarked on an ambitious and challenging journey in terms of its own diversity and inclusion which incorporated significant formal structural changes in terms of its Board and policies; and organisational 'norms' change in terms of anti-racism, decolonisation, and disability inclusion. The organisational culture review surfaced some **internal mistrust issues related to transparency and accountability** which were addressed this year. The 'River of Change' action planning exercise has been co-developed by staff at IWDA to address these issues across short, medium and long-term horizons. Though addressing the harmful experiences that Women of Colour at IWDA reported was a necessary activity for the organisation, it did have some unintended negative outcomes, which are outlined further in Section Three.

Question 3: Where did we fall short, and why?

A resounding sentiment from across the organisation was that not only was 'business as usual' maintained, but an **impressive agenda of new work was delivered despite the challenging context**. IWDA reflected that not as much progress was made as hoped on cross-team and systems changes, such as the Netsuite optimisation, improvements to contracting processes, progressing climate justice work, revitalising staff performance support, and establishing different and flexible funding models. Teams were also able to identify activities which they had to de-prioritise, opportunities which had to be classified as 'non-business critical' or where momentum was unable to be sustained due to competing demands. The Communications team, for example, felt that they did not have capacity to do all the accompaniment work requested; and the Equality Insights team identified their "interrupted trajectories"[16] as focusing on 'Equality Insights Rapid' meant other work, such as maintaining connections with previous data collection initiatives in the Solomon Islands, had to be put on hold. The Equality Insights team also noted that the new branding required with the shift from the Individual Deprivation Measure to Equality Insights has required extensive work to regain the visibility and engagement that was built under the previous brand and the team have not yet been able to build back to former levels of engagement. The Partnership Team noted that they hadn't been able to make as much progress as hoped in terms of decolonising practice, diversifying funding to reduce dependence on Australian Government funding, addressing sustainability and ensuring exit strategies with partners, nor were they able to review the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to increase its strategic value (now scheduled for FY21-22). Across the organisation, finalisation of key IWDA knowledge products were delayed, for example IWDA's Decolonising Framework, Partnership Framework, and Country Plans, and supporting uptake of existing products weren't able to be prioritised, such as piloting the Feminist Organisational Capacity Strengthening (FOCS) modules.

Through IWDA's organisational reflection processes, thematic challenges emerged for why IWDA was not able to advance all areas as initially planned. As to be expected, disruptions resulting from **COVID-**

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[15] Board Report June 2021.
[16] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

19 was a significant barrier identified by all teams, in terms of personal work arrangements, changing internal systems, pivoting to new priorities, and developing new ways to engage with external stakeholders or perform core tasks such as receiving donations or managing mail outs for appeals and newsletters. Shared difficulties identified across teams included isolation and the challenges of working remotely in terms of connectivity and collaboration, balancing home schooling during business hours (a significant organisational impact given the Inclusion@Work data shows that 75% of IWDA staff have caring responsibilities compared to the national average of 38.2% for the Australian workforce), negative impacts to organisational culture and exacerbation of IWDA's internal "trust deficit" observed by IWDA's leadership team as an existing issue that was compounded by remote working conditions,[17] in addition to technology and time zone challenges of connecting with external stakeholders.

Resource constraints was also a common feature across teams, both in terms of **team staffing and financial resourcing**. Staff turnover was perhaps the most significant issue: with teams experiencing vacant roles due to staff departures and parental leave, particularly noticeable in terms of accreditation, finance, fundraising, and monitoring, evaluation and learning; and the Partnership team restructure due to the non-renewal of grant funding from the Government of Netherlands. The effect of staff turnover was acutely felt by the Finance Team who "needed to help staff to understand the systems and double-check their coding…[causing] significantly more work"[18] in terms of initial training and ongoing support to build understanding of IWDA financial systems and processes. So too, staff departures in Partnership Team impacted continuity of partnership relationships and historical knowledge of partner priorities: a point which was emphasised by partners in the *Partner Perception Review*. Several teams also noted the challenges of high ambitions with insufficient resourcing to deliver and the continued challenge of saying 'no' to requests from other teams which hadn't been realistically factored into budgets or where input was requested too late.

In addition to not adequately consulting about appropriate budgeting for cross-team support, other resource constraints were noted due to the loss of WAVE resourcing and the transition from the IDM to Equality Insights project, particularly in terms of communications resourcing. The Equality Insights Team noted their "fast footwork to utilise the Generation Equality Forum opportunity…with not a lot [of resources]" and identified the challenges of short term funding which "makes it hard to build momentum and potentially lose expertise"; a view corroborated by the Fundraising and Grants Team who spoke about "the work involved in securing funding for Equality Insights…[requiring] four full proposals developed for a single donor with constantly shifting timeframes for contracting." An interesting observation emerged that, whether speaking to major donors, supporters or donors, IWDA often presents to external donors what we're committed to without articulating the funding required to deliver our ambitions and approach – a finding which will be further explored in Section Four where we explore how we will adapt.

Silos and issues of power within the organisation were identified across teams; communicated in terms of lack of respect for different skill sets, the perception that some teams' work is less valued, and a sense of 'gatekeeping' which restricts access or participation of some teams. Teams with internal-facing roles in particular felt that there were barriers within the organisation with power dynamics forcing them to change their priorities, having to work hard to overcome silos and build trust, and only hearing from colleagues when something goes wrong. The Finance Team articulated their sense that their team "occupies an interesting space as being considered an 'ally' or 'road block',

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[17] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.
[18] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

depending on what we're being asked for or are asking for,"[19] and Communications Team staff who noted that "[Our work is] so much about internal relationships, some know they need us to do their job but with new staff and the worry of the last year, this is not a standard understanding."[20] Staff noted that some teams could not talk about their work as freely as others, and that some teams' contributions remain 'invisible'. It was also acknowledged that organisational recognition was more apparent for some teams with achievements, such as RPA or fundraising, celebrated in all-staff emails.

The **internal focused and emotionally-challenging work of FY20-21**, in terms of the diversity and inclusion (D&I) work and accreditation; and the thought leadership represented by decolonisation, strategic monitoring, evaluation and learning, knowledge translation, and movement strengthening; has had an impact on the thinking space and emotional energy across the organisation. The D&I work and anti-racism training, in particular, had an emotional toll on staff, felt acutely by the Communications Team as the only team wholly made up of women of colour (WOC), and disproportionately affecting all women of colour across the organisation: "There were productivity impacts in addition to culture impacts as a result of both COVID-19 and IWDA's anti-racism work…. WOC have pushed this along in terms of our organisation; there are white women who didn't bear this cost."[21] All teams acknowledged the challenges of addressing racism and unpacking our objectives around decolonisation: important but draining work which displaced other priorities and was difficult to accommodate, particularly for part time staff, due to the mandatory nature of training and participation.

Finally, **information and data** was an emerging category of challenge across the organisation. For example, Equality Insights identified that they were not able to collect data and track uptake of the measure outside of funding cycles, creating critical gaps in evidence of impact which is almost always going to accrue outside a short-term funding window; Communications Team spoke about the limitations of their existing client management system and their hopes for Salesforce (to be implemented in FY21-22); Leadership Team lamented not having time for reflective practice nor being able to collect information on strategic rather than just operational issues; staff performance feedback via twice yearly 360 degree reviews was deprioritised; and core Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning work was not progressed due to role vacancy. Related technological issues were also identified; including communications systems, such as challenges with Datto, when moving from office to remote working arrangements; and connectivity challenges, including the time zone of the region being deprioritised when engaging with global and regional opportunities.

Question 4: In light of these learnings, how will we adapt?

IWDA's key achievements and outcomes have been analysed using the 3s Framework to explore where IWDA has successfully been able to 'Step Up', 'Stand With' and 'Step Back' in relation to our partners, fellow movement actors, allies, and stakeholders. As the facilitated reflections were underway, the benefit of viewing the 3s framework from an internal standpoint to better understand how teams stand in relation to their colleagues and relationships *within* IWDA, became apparent and has been adopted in the presentation of results. Learnings have therefore been categorised into two key areas:

- an increased understanding of the role we play in our partnerships and external relationships,

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[19] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.
[20] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.
[21] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

- and areas identified for internal change, in the words of our stakeholders, to "explore how to be the next best version of [ourselves]".[22]

Adapting to grow into our role and increase our value as a solidarity partner and actor in our own right

In terms of key learning for how we 'step up', 'stand with' and 'step back' with external partners and stakeholders, IWDA identified our strengths and value in addition to opportunities where we could transition to 'stand with' or 'step back' in future as we apply our decolonisation principles in practice.

Step Up: Thought leadership and knowledge & Practice and Approach

IWDA felt that the new Strategic Plan "mandates us to hold space ourselves"[23] and gave the team permission to be clearer about IWDA's role and legitimate position within the feminist movement ecosystem. The Leadership Team recognised that the pivot to working remotely and supporting partners differently saw IWDA "not just maintaining but actually increasing IWDA's visibility on the national, international and regional stages."[24] Our strength in terms of 'stepping up' to **develop and support uptake of IWDA knowledge** was recognised internally across teams and corroborated by feedback from external stakeholders – whether the Equality Insights measure; research such as *From Seeds to Roots: Trajectories towards feminist foreign policy* or *Creating Equitable Partnerships*; articulating IWDA's approach to knowledge translation and feminist movement strengthening; participating in Generation Equality Forum and other global and regional fora, communicating complex ideas in an accessible way, or engaging more with feminist movements and 'building constituencies'. External stakeholders noted their 'appreciation for IWDA's intellectual work, critical analysis, and research products'[25] but also advised that "[t]he more they can join up these areas [of programming, policy advocacy, and research] the more powerful their work will be."[26] IWDA likewise recognised the value of "knowledge translation as a function not a team"[27] and would like to build upon its success in harnessing the skills and knowledge across teams to generate achievements such as the *Creating Equitable South North Partnerships* research, participation in the Generation Equality Forum, feminist foreign policy research and the *Imagining Feminist Futures After COVID-19* toolkit. The challenges experienced at times in engaging the Global South were recognised, however there were opportunities to promote the voice of others which will hopefully be expanded, just as IWDA hopes that Equality Insights will further amplify the voice of others and take a greater role in future in "putting the data in their hands".[28]

IWDA was also able to 'step up' via its leadership in terms of **feminist and decolonisation practice, and approach to partnership**. Our stakeholders noted that "IWDA is the one example of the global north organization that is trying to make a better change. Even the UN agencies need to learn from this;"[29] a sentiment echoed by our partners who observed that "they are the most progressive feminist donors we have and they have core values that are feminist based and driven".[30] IWDA noted with

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[22] Interviewee, IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.1.

[23] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

[24] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

[25] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.3.

[26] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.5.

[27] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

[28] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

[29] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.4.

[30] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 6.

pride its achievements in diversifying its Board to include women with lived experience and cultural heritage from the region; its leadership in terms of supporting staff with additional 'wellbeing leave' and flexibility in the face of COVID-19 (and indeed its targeted content produced on COVID-19's impact on women, was one of IWDA's highest performing organic post on social media);[31] and recognised that the Strategic Plan MEL Framework is a whole new way of talking about our work which has us "leading in the sector about how we differentiate our work from our partners".[32] Indeed, when asked about IWDA's approach, external stakeholders and partners alike noted the feminist and power-sensitive practice exhibited by IWDA: 'Most interviewees referenced the stakeholder perception survey as an example of what they most value from IWDA. A real and demonstrated commitment to reflecting on how to improve and grow as an organisation.'[33] Our willingness to 'openly address power dynamics and make space for courageous conversations about power within its range of relationships'[34] and 'sensitivity to power'[35] when engaging with our partners sets IWDA apart and establishes an opportunity to '[lead] the way on intersectionality/inclusiveness with other NGOs'.[36] For IWDA to heed this call, both courage and leadership will be required. This includes knowing when and how to *use* power, not just *name* power. This was reflected back to IWDA by partners who reported occasions where IWDA's power-sensitivity led to a hesitation to make decisions which makes it awkward for partners.[37]

Stand With: Resource Mobilisation, Locational Power, & Accompaniment and Solidarity

Resource mobilisation and flexibility was an area of strong performance noted by partners, particularly in terms of responding to COVID-19 and natural disasters, and also recognised by IWDA in terms of our innovation in seeking funding on behalf of partners. Examples of funding innovation included identifying new funding sources after the WAVE program ceased, exceeding targets for major gifts and our tax appeal, and utilising ANCP despite a drop in funding from DFAT. Partners voiced 'that in order for any donor partner to work effectively in the Asia Pacific region that they had to have a good understanding of the impacts of climate change, natural disasters and social unrest in this region and be open to changing activities, budget reallocation and additional budgetary support'.[38] IWDA was recognised as being highly responsive during this challenging period, providing additional funding and seeking to genuinely understand the situation facing partners: "[IWDA ask us how do we want to approach the problem and when we tell how we want to do it, they approve it and support us with extra funds if we need it and can justify it...this is not normal, well not with other donors".[39] IWDA took pride in recognising the role it has played this year in advocating for increased resourcing to women's rights organisations, whether through using its relationships to approach donors, its influence within high level design processes such as the design of the 'Pacific Women Lead' Program, supporting the sector's campaign to rally support for an additional injection of funds into the aid budget, or acting as a fiscal sponsor for partners to access new funding opportunities.

External stakeholders also noted the strength of IWDA's current fundraising approach: "Calling people, making contact, and more effective promotions on social media. Program managers participating in fundraising, not just the fundraisers. In the past, fundraising hasn't been as effectively

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[31] IWDA Board Report, August 2020.
[32] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.
[33] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.1.
[34] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.1.
[35] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 6.
[36] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.5.
[37] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 6.
[38] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 9.
[39] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 8.

targeted."[40] The Fundraising Team noted that it was able to perform well compared to others in the sector as IWDA do not have a reliance on face-to-face giving, community fundraising events, or corporate gifts however they also took great pride in delivering four appeals and three newsletters despite having a new team. IWDA also took steps to secure new skill sets in its Board; developed its new Communications Strategy; addressed systemic issues such as defining Staff Cost Recovery rates adaptable to different types of funders "which had been a problem for the organisation for the past five years";[41] and created new roles to position us to make further progress in advocating for increased funding for women's rights organisations and greater untied funding to increase IWDA flexibility and responsiveness to partner needs. In order to continue progress towards financial sustainability, IWDA needs to successfully navigate between 'rights' and 'needs based' fundraising approaches, better manage the relationships people across the organisation have with big funders (hopefully with the assistance of Salesforce going forward), develop consistent and accessible ways of communicating the importance of core funding for women's rights organisations including IWDA, innovate in how we seek funding, and continue to challenge IWDA staff about their assumptions about whether external parties would, or indeed should, pay for IWDA knowledge products.

The Myanmar advocacy work was identified by many across IWDA as a useful example of 'standing with'; not only did RPA Team stand with other parts of the organisation as they took the lead on the advocacy function, but the focus of the advocacy has really been on using our **locational power to amplify the voice** of Myanmar partners. This was particularly noted in relation to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Parliamentary Inquiry on Myanmar and advocating to Australian MPs. In unpacking the relevance of this role, IWDA noted that it was able to play a coordination role to develop common messages, supported our partner organisation to launch a petition and promoted it via email and social media which secured 20% of the 12,000 signatures, and 'tabled the signature count at the time of presenting evidence in the hearing to provide evidence of the Australian public's support for stronger action by Australia'. [42] One partner noted that "[IWDA] are also good at Generation Equality stuff and keeping us up to date and encouraging us to participate"[43] and IWDA noted its role connecting young women leaders to fora such as CSW and the RDI Network Conference. These examples, in many ways represent the type of role requested of IWDA by our partners 'in helping to (build/strengthen/maintain/nourish) the wider feminist movements in each of the partner regions.'[44] They felt that IWDA was well-placed to 'link' key players from the grassroots to global level and 'assisting with connecting the dots'.[45] IWDA noted the importance of cross-team collaboration across RPA, Communication and Partnerships Teams to harness this power, but also noted a potential future opportunity to build on IWDA's experience working with staff in Fiji and Myanmar, and step back and support staff at partner WROs who work on communications to create content themselves and to build additional capacity via IWDA tools such as 'Plan Your Power'.

IWDA's **approach to accompaniment and solidarity** was both recognised as a strength by IWDA and widely praised by our stakeholders and partners. Our partners noted: "In feminist sisterhood, IWDA is constantly saying "how would you like us to support you?"[46] and one stakeholder observed of IWDA as a solidarity partner: "if it's about engagement, taking space and giving space, we've had nothing

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[40] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.2.
[41] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.
[42] IWDA Board Report, June 2021.
[43] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 5.
[44] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 9.
[45] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 5.
[46] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 8.

but an excellent relationship of solidarity."[47] Key learning in this space pointed to the value of IWDA's technical assistance - whether financial, project design or project implementation – but also highlighted opportunities to work towards our own redundancy and increase utilisation of locally-led expertise. Our stakeholders urged IWDA to "[k]eep maintaining and nurturing relationships the way they are now, which is not standard"[48] and in order to do this IWDA needs to be mindful about how IWDA staff engage with more experienced women leaders from the

IWDA staff show support at 'Enough is Enough!' rally for Women's March 4 Justice, Melbourne, March 2021.

Global South, and how we manage, prioritise and budget for our accompaniment commitments.

Step Back: Respect for Others' Knowledge and Skills

In reflecting on how IWDA has been able to 'step back', many examples emphasised where IWDA gave up power and control, or 'held space' for the knowledge and skills of others. Key examples included IWDA providing Equality Insights support documents but the Solomon Islands Steering Committee conducting their own gender data advocacy and policy influence with the Government Statistician; trusting the knowledge and vision of others' in designing and promoting the *Creating Equitable Partnerships* research; handing over compliance, research and capacity building support to in-country advisors; declining IWDA representation on panels to protest lack of diversity (and leading others to walk away in solidarity); and supporting partner submissions rather than joint submissions as per the Gender Based Violence inquiry in PNG. While acknowledging the challenges of documenting the impact of 'what IWDA doesn't do', staff noted that further opportunities to step back will be supported with the upcoming guidance of IWDA's Decolonisation Framework and further challenging ourselves to disrupt conventional approaches, take informed risks, and keep trialing new approaches and ways of working.

Working on our next best version of ourselves

As noted previously, a key finding of the reflective process was the value of using the 3s Framework to define our ways of relating to, and empowering, our colleagues. From those conversations IWDA identified the importance of finding the time and space to **foster cross team connections, nurture our internal relationships, and better understand our respective work**. While progress has been made, particularly in accepting the role the Communications Team plays, there was a strong message that further work is required across the organisation to boost the profile of some teams, particularly the Business Transformation and Finance Teams to educate staff on how integral they are and make sure their work is appropriately resourced and recognised. For example, some staff spoke of a desired shift in language from their 'providing *support*' to '*enabling* the work' of the organisation. Several practical activities were suggested, for example, Communications Team would like to have a communications induction for all new starters to better understand their role and when to seek their input. Leadership Team would like to foster "knowledge translation as a function not a team"[49] as the achievements in FY20-21 represented practice to be replicated in future. Business Transformation Team would like to boost the

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[47] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.4.
[48] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.5.
[49] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

profile of its operations work and "to re-position Business Transformation as partners for the organisation to deliver [its work]".[50] RPA saw the Feminist Futures work as an example of incorporating the understanding of movement strengthening into IWDA's knowledge creation and advocacy work and would like to do more of this in the future; and Partnerships Team would like to strengthen their handover practice to support both internal team members and relationships with partners.

Resolving resourcing issues and defining appropriate priorities within available resources was also a common area of reflection. For some staff, engaging in the work of others requires early identification and appropriate budgeting for their input, as well as respect for their existing priorities. For others, there is a need to manage their own and others' expectations for what is achievable, accepting that it may be necessary to do smaller projects rather than taking up bigger challenges due to human resource capacity limitations; cultivate opportunities to step back and see the bigger picture rather than being reactive; better understand the range of current commitments before accepting new requests; and outsource work to external consultants where possible. Acknowledging the small size of the RPA team, they would like to advocate for introducing more entry level roles into the team to allow opportunities to support young women of colour build the requisite skills and experience they need to gain future jobs in this sector while also bringing greater diversity of voices to their work and the feminist movement more broadly. They would also like to build on a key learning in FY20-21, from their experience developing the feminist foreign policy research, that being flexible about how to sequence and re-prioritise work both respects well-being and can also lead to a more participatory approach overall when not rushing to deliver against internal deadlines. The value of identifying and respecting boundaries for what is achievable, and in what timeframe, is an area for future work in FY21-22 with support from coaching organisation, MindTribes.

While the Stakeholder and Partner Perception Reviews were largely positive, albeit acknowledging areas for improvement, the feedback from many areas across our work identified the desire to **further strengthen external relationships and develop more nuanced knowledge of our partners**. Fostering direct relationships with partners was seen as an area for further development by both the Communications Team and RPA, and there was hope that a new Advocacy Advisor role commencing in FY21-22 in addition to new processes, such as closer engagement with new programs built in via the 'advisor model', would support this objective. The Partnerships Team wants to better identify opportunities where DFAT can be an ally rather than an advocacy target or adversary, and there was also an important reminder from the Fundraising and Grants Team that new funding opportunities are not always going to be through open funding applications but will rather be cultivated through the relationships IWDA can develop with major funders. As part of 'stepping back', IWDA would like to develop and nurture relationships with in-country consultants and allies as a more sustainable model of 'accompaniment' which furthers decolonisation and locally-led practice by encouraging partners to work with other organisations in-country who have specific expertise.

Some of the areas of adaptation relate to **organisational systems changes** which have been scoped and planned this year but have yet to be implemented, and others are longer term objectives to improve our internal systems and processes. The move to Salesforce as our new customer relationship management system, for example, will be implemented next financial year, as will the Netsuite optimisation and piloting a new qualitative data analysis system. New ways to derive income from IWDA knowledge products and skills are planned, Partnerships Team would like to improve its risk management processes to better embed and formalise check-in processes with partners, and there is a desire to use Teams and Datto more effectively to support our work.

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[50] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.

Unarguably the vision of the 2020-23 Strategic Plan has provided a clearer understanding of our identity, also recognised by our partners and stakeholders, however IWDA is still **finding our voice in articulating that identity**. The Partner Perception Review found that 'Conversations around decolonization, diversity and inclusion have become critical entry points into self-reflection and asking WHO ARE WE? for IWDA management and staff',[51] and yet several teams identified instances where IWDA does not yet display confidence to voice our position, value add or requirements. For example, RPA noted that IWDA still needs to "figure out our organisational voice for media and advocacy-related communications,"[52] particularly when it comes to critiquing the Australian Government, attributed to our continued lack of funding diversity and lack of clarity over how to best use the CEO and different members of the team as the voice of the organisation. The Partnerships Team noted that it was still difficult to articulate our value add, and that we need to be able to better communicate to our partners our Australian-based advocacy work in response to feedback that "IWDA could be more vocal in holding their own government to account in terms of how they provide support to our country".[53] And while our stakeholders and partners both recognise the many examples of IWDA proactively addressing issues of power, there is still work to be done in order to "have courageous conversations".[54]

Next Steps

Prior to finalisation, IWDA's Board engaged with the findings and adaptation actions arising from the MEL process. Key questions posed to the Board included:
- From the reflections in the body of this report, and from CEO Reports to the Board, what is emerging for you as the **key barriers** to the organisational achievement of the strategic plan?
- From your own areas of expertise, what do you see as the most impactful actions IWDA could take in this Strategic Plan period to **increase the value of our contribution** when we 'step up' or 'stand with' women's rights organisations and movement actors in solidarity?

Common themes emerged from across the Board and Leadership groups regarding both barriers and insights, and have been structured into three key categories of change: staff resources, financial resources, and opportunities for external influence.

Staff Resources

Challenges relating to IWDA staffing were noted by all teams, including issues such as post-Covid wellbeing, the need for unique skills sets ('unicorns'), a lack of succession planning, and limited time available to do strategic work rather than internal-facing and operational work. The Board also explored the lack of appropriate resourcing levels for managing the objectives of our strategic plan and delivering the full potential of our Business Transformation work in line with sectoral trends, and a gap in terms of internal capacity for financial acumen (such as solid financial management across the organisation reflecting that every role has a responsibility to understand the models of 'money in and money out' which informs the nature of IWDA's work).

Opportunities and insights for addressing IWDA's internal resourcing limitations included:
- matching our staffing capabilities with our future direction (ie what skillsets will position IWDA as the 'third way'?);

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[51] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p. 6.
[52] Staff participant, FY20-21 Team/Sub-team reflection workshop as part of Strategic Plan MEL process.
[53] Interviewee, IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.5.
[54] Interviewee, IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p.6.

- ensuring opportunities for IWDA staff, particularly Leadership and CEO, to focus on strategic rather than operational matters;
- managing transitions within IWDA, including supporting senior staff to move into Director positions;
- the importance of technical readiness in order to position us for our future work and to leverage cross-team capabilities;
- Needing to balance 'head' and 'heart', internal and external issues, and continue to question the relationship of internal, 'heart' issues to our core business. We need to prioritise our work to ensure 'space for thinking'!
- Evolving as a gender diverse organisation is a priority going forward to ensure our ideals and values don't present a barrier to finding the right people (potentially including men) to deliver IWDA's vision.

Financial Resources

Key issues relating to IWDA's financial resourcing included our vulnerability and potential constraints associated with a reliance on DFAT funding, the need to question our approach to decolonisation and donor types (should we take traditional donors on a decolonising journey or look for new donors who don't have the same legacy and challenges?), and insufficient funding to resource our strategic plan in a way that allows us to reach our full organisational potential and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Suggestions for action included:
- revisiting our environmental scoping exercise undertaken to inform the Strategic Plan design in order to maintain an up-to-date understanding of our unique value and understand our 'competition';
- needing to resource ourselves adequately and in doing so, play to our strengths. How do we find the right donors to allow us to do this? Are we considering geopolitical change as an opportunity in the context of Australian investment into Pacific and other places, and with other bilateral donors? How can we use the 3s Framework of 'stepping up', 'standing with' and 'stepping back', and incorporate thinking on decolonisation into feminist foreign policy? Can we further engage with stakeholders who have a different colonial history than UK and France and may therefore be more receptive to ideas about decoloniality/decolonisation?
- building capacity in financial acumen in the sector, and for partners, to communicate to donors and supporters the true cost of delivering systemic change work.

Opportunities for External Influence

A barrier to reaching our full potential in external influence included not being resourced in a way that recognises the time commitment required to manage donors and external stakeholders, and the risk that IWDA is 'spreading ourselves too thin'. The Board acknowledged that change-making happens through different means and influence may take place 'behind closed doors'; critique-only can alienate the parties we want to influence so we need to make space for other forms of engagement and 'be in the room', which is challenging as an organisation geographically located in the global South and with Covid-related travel restrictions.

The Board agreed that IWDA is making a difference to women's rights, but how does IWDA fund itself to do more of that work? Insights included the action to help staff to understand who is on IWDA's Board as our Board members can assist in building and facilitating connections within the movement and region. IWDA's commitment to 'Stepping back' is recognised, however we need to

embed this into program delivery to ensure IWDA is a valued solidarity actor but also has the 'space' to play strategic roles. For example, can we move beyond critique and also prioritise positive actions such as working behind the scenes to influence government, opposition, and global forums? And in the Equality Insights space, could we consider how IWDA can secure funding to work in spaces that attract geopolitical attention to the measure and further increase our capacity to engage global players (i.e. selection of high profile countries for Equality Insights data collection)?

The opportunity to bring our Board member voices into discussions of our work - our challenges, successes and next steps – has contributed new perspectives, increased the richness of our insight, and achieved one of the key objectives of strategic monitoring, evaluation and learning: evidence-based decision-making. The planned year three evaluative activities will be an opportunity to further build our understanding of IWDA's achievements, to challenge whether the strategies employed are the right ones, to test the assumptions underpinning our plan, and to address the questions posed by our stakeholders. In the meantime, as succinctly communicated by our partners, 'If you keep trying to do better, that means you care and that's what matters'.[55] It is hoped this MEL Report provides relevant information to keep asking ourselves the hard questions, to prioritise learning, and to continue to grow into the new identity envisaged by our Strategic Plan. Our partners have given us food for thought in addition to sage advice, and our stakeholders have challenged us to continue to understand the 'specialised niche IWDA wants to occupy' and to maintain our 'high level of transparency… to allow other organisations to learn from IWDA's journey.'[56]

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[55] IWDA Partner Perception Review, July 2021, p,13.
[56] IWDA Stakeholder Perception Review, July 2021, p.5.

Acronym List

3S: 3s Framework

ACFID: Australian Council for International Development

ANCP: Australia NGO Cooperation Program

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

COVID-19: Coronavirus 19

CSOs: Civil Society Organisations

CSW: Commission on the Status of Women

DFAT: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

D&I: diversity and inclusion

EI: Equality Insights

FFP: feminist foreign policy

G@W: Gender at Work (Framework)

GEF: Generation Equality Forum

GEF AC6: Generation Equality Forum Action Coalition 6

G-TAG: Global Technical Advisory Group (Equality Insights)

JASS: Just Associates

MEL: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

MPs: Members of Parliament

RDI: Research for Development Impact Network

RPA: Research, Policy and Advocacy Team

TWO: Ta'ang Women's Organisation (IWDA Partner in Myanmar)

W7: Women 7 Summit

WAVE: Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment (IWDA program funded under the Dutch Funding Leadership Opportunities for Women (FLOW) initiative)

WHRDs: Women Human Rights Defenders

WOC: women of colour

WRAM: Women's Rights Action Movement (IWDA partner organisation in Solomon Islands)

WRO: Women's Rights Organisation

Annex A: Headline indicators for FY20-21

Indicator	Description/ Measurement	Target	Actual FY20-21
Dollar amount of funds released to diverse women's rights organisations	Measured by the amount of money released (either as at 31 December or 31 June).	AUD $4.5 million	$4.537m
Number of women's organisations supported	Measured by the number of women's organisations financially supported by IWDA.	Not applicable	27
Proportion of multi-year grants released	Measured by the proportion of multi-year grants released out of the total value of grants for the financial year.	Not applicable	Not captured – indicator retired
Number of accompaniment activities delivered	To be determined	Not applicable	42[57]
Number of convenings supported	To be determined	Not applicable	22[58]
Number of knowledge products produced	Measured by the number of knowledge products produced by IWDA. A knowledge product is an output, produced by IWDA that contributes to filling a knowledge gap, and/or to communicate, educate inform or raise awareness of stakeholders on a topic. Examples include reports, briefs, articles, technical guides and videos.	Not applicable	53
Number of uptake, use and advocacy activities	Measured by the number of uptake, use and advocacy activities taken by IWDA. Uptake, use and advocacy activities are actions that support or enable stakeholders to use information produced, or data collected, by IWDA. Examples include: presenting at domestic or international meetings, conferences or workshops; delivering training to partners or stakeholders; and holding a dedicated briefing.	Not applicable	113
Number of solidarity actions	Measured by the number of solidarity actions taken by IWDA. Solidarity actions include instances where IWDA signs onto petitions, open letters or submissions led by other organisations.	Not applicable	52
Number of stakeholders engaged	Measured by the number of stakeholders engaged in IWDA's work. A stakeholder is any person or organisation outside of IWDA who takes part in an event, workshop or project hosted through IWDA and through that engagement has contact with an IWDA staff member.	Not applicable	1119[59]
Number of blogs promoting and supporting uptake of knowledge products	Measured by the number of IWDA blogs promoting and supporting uptake of knowledge products	Not applicable	11
Number of multilateral forums contributed to	Measured by the number of multilateral forums that IWDA contributes to. A multilateral forum is an international or regional space where more than two governments come together with Civil Society involvement.	Not applicable	12
Number of donors	Measured by the number of donors - individuals and philanthropy that donate to IWDA for our discretionary (untied) use and receive a tax deduction in return. This includes major donors, regular givers and cash givers (last gift of $2 or more in 12 months previous to the reporting period)	1300 regular givers	1248 regular givers 4547 total donors

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[57] While development of an organisational definition for the indicator is underway in FY21-22, a proxy was used for FY20-21, namely Partnerships Team data 'Number and type of capacity building activities for partners' which is a historic ANCP indicator.

[58] While development of an organisational definition for the indicator is underway in FY21-22, data for FY20-21 included data from Research, Policy and Advocacy Team (RPA) (15) and Equality Insights (7).

[59] This total represents the sum of data from RPA (858, noting some double-counting across engagement activities), Equality Insights (63) and Partnerships Teams on the 'Number of attendees participating in capacity building activities for partners (eg partner staff)' (198).

Total amount of donor funding	Measured by the consolidated amount raised from major donors, regular givers and cash givers.	Not applicable	$1.65m
Number of tied funders	Measured by the total number of tied funders - entities (Australian and International), including governments, multi-laterals, philanthropy and businesses that provide funding with a set of contractual obligations attached.	Not applicable	20
Total amount of tied funding	Measured by the consolidated amount raised from tied funders - entities (Australian and International) including governments, multi-laterals, philanthropy and businesses that provide funding with a set of contractual obligations attached.	Not applicable	$7,319,419
Number of multi-year funders	Measured by the number of multi-year funders - entities (Australian and International), including governments, multi-laterals, philanthropy and business that provide at least two years of funding in a funding grant or contract.	Not applicable	12
Ratio of tied / untied funding	Measured by the proportion of tied and untied funding. Tied funding refers to funding with a set of contractual obligations attached. Untied funding refers to funding with no contractual obligations over and above the general purpose of the organisation and includes ANCP funding from major donors.	73/27 ratio of tied:untied funding	70/30
Rate of employee satisfaction	Measured by the proportion of staff that report that they "strongly agree" or "agree" with the following statement: all things considered I believe this organisation is a great place to work.	70%	97.3% of staff reported they were either 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their job, *Inclusion@Work diversity index.[60]*
Rate of employee retention	Measured by the proportion of staff who remained employed with IWDA during a specific period.	75%	73%
Rate of employee internal fill	Measured by the proportion of roles advertised that are filled by people from within the organisation during a specific period.	15%	31%
Diversity of employees	Measured by the proportion of staff who identify as women of colour	Not applicable	36%, *Inclusion@Work diversity index*
Rate of employees self-reporting their manager cares about their wellbeing	Measured by the proportion of staff that report that they "strongly agree" or "agree" with the following statement: My manager cares about me as a person and my personal wellbeing.	Not applicable	Not available FY20-21[61]

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[60] A different definition of employee satisfaction was used for FY20-21 due to data collected via the Inclusion@Work survey which uses 'overall, how satisfied are you with your job?' rather than the Employee Engagement Survey which asks participants the extent they agree/disagree with the statement 'all things considered, I believe this organisation is a great place to work'. IWDA plans to use these two surveys in alternate years so the data will not be directly comparable across consecutive years.

[61] Data will be available every two years as there is no proxy for this indicator for the years where IWDA uses the *Inclusion@Work diversity index.*

Annex B: Partner Achievement Summary FY20-21

A key highlight of 2020-21 was seeing the impressive resilience of IWDA partners. As our partners are embedded in their communities they are able to adapt to situations and demonstrate this strength to their governments. In many ways COVID was an enabler: it pushed the localisation agenda and the restrictions promoted new ways of working and connecting with the region, such as telephone counselling and online convening which broadened participation and decreased barriers such as ticket and travel costs. The increase in sexual violence, gender based violence (GBV) and violence affecting children was also a significant challenge, particularly with government de-prioritisation of GBV funding as occurred in the Solomon Islands, however new spaces for political discussions about violence against women and girls opened up and there was increased prioritisation of this issue by donors such as DFAT. Key achievements from across the partnership portfolio are included below, mapped against the Gender@Work Framework of formal and informal change in individuals and systems.

Individual

Consciousness and Capabilities

In programming by GADC focused on women's economic empowerment in Cambodia, 20 women out of 24 women reported feeling more empowered in economic decision making, and even with the challenges of COVID, six increased their income. Interviews with couples showed that the accompanying Men's Network activities increased equality in their relationships and changes to men's behaviour. (GADC Evaluation)

In programming focused on sexual diversity in Cambodia, ROCK reported increased "willingness, bravery, confidence and readiness" of members to speak up on LGBTQI+ issues at events and to the media.

In Timor Leste, an external evaluation found evidence of male leaders expressing feminist values, prioritising issues that women have raised to them and having a strong commitment to supporting women and people with disabilities.

Resources

In PNG, VfC provided gender based violence services to 210 people, and increased their capacity by securing lawyers on staff.

In Solomon Islands, FSC and CCC provided response services to 2147 people through their Safe Houses and community counsellors, and made infrastructure improvements to increase accessibility to people with disabilities. An external evaluation found that the FSC Provincial Committee model was 'crucial to increasing rural women's access to services and increased awareness of violence against women and girls and the Family Protection Act.'

In Timor Leste, AlFeLa provided essential services to 276 survivors while navigating the challenging context, for example providing telephone response and participating in online forums for service coordination.

In response to COVID, ROCK and United Sisterhood in Cambodia provided emergency supplies to vulnerable women and US also provided emotional support to sex workers and entertainment workers who were ineligible for government assistance.

Informal ←→ **Formal**

Social Norms and Deep Structure

In Timor Leste, CCC was found to have had 'clear impacts on changing attitudes [to women's leadership] and shifting the enabling environment through raising awareness including hosting large events that allow women "to see and be seen".' (CCC Evaluation)

In Myanmar, Women's League of Burma published a monthly report on human rights violations to raise awareness.

In Fiji, FWRM's contribution to Association for Women's Rights in Development on the International Labour Organisation convention of sexual harassment in the workplace was reported by international media; their press release was quoted 29 times by other media. FWRM's International Women's Day campaign of radio, TV and social media over a month promoted women's rights and explored the gendered impact of the pandemic reached approximately 3000 people per day.

In the Pacific, the We Rise Coalition has identified four new partner grassroots organisations in Vanuatu, Samoa, Tonga and PNG, expanding regional collaborations.

Rules and Policies

Through the WE RISE Coalition, meetings with ministers and policy makers at global fora such as Triennial and CSW were conducted to influence government policy.

In Fiji, FWRM and Femlink were part of the NGO Coalition on Human Rights to hold the government to account particularly around COVID restrictions. FWRM's research into vaccine perceptions and Femlink's first virtual rural women's convening led to more gender-responsive government solutions, such as drive-through clinics. FemLink also made a submission to the Ministry of Economy to highlight challenges and recommendations for rural women for the national budget.

In PNG, WBCA supported 13 Ward Development Plans and strengthened relations with local level governments to become more engaged in community planning processes; and EHFV, VfC and NCfR influenced the PNG Special Parliamentary Committee on gender based violence.

In Solomon Islands, seven provinces have endorsed the inclusion of Temporary Special Measures for women's political leadership.

Systemic