WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE AND EMPOWERMENT

WAVE







5 YEAR REPORT

2016-2020











INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (IWDA), IN PARTNERSHIP WITH 18 WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS, COLLABORATED TO DELIVER THE WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE AND EMPOWERMENT (WAVE) PROGRAM IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC BETWEEN 2016 AND 2020.

In five countries - Cambodia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands - WAVE demonstrated the collective action, voice and power of diverse women leaders, women's rights organisations and movements in achieving change, enabled by strategic feminist engagement.

WAVE was a ground-breaking women's leadership program, bringing together and supporting individual women, organisations, and movements in Asia and the Pacific region to increase the representation of women in diverse leadership positions.

WAVE's goal was for women to lead transformative, sustainable change towards gender equality through strategic feminist engagement.

IWDA is committed to long-term partnerships with women's organisations in Asia and the Pacific region, and builds on partners' skills and strengths to provide capacity strengthening tools, resources and support that will make WAVE partners more effective and resilient.

IWDA's role in WAVE was as an ally, strategist, convenor, funder and partner at regional and international levels. IWDA, with partners, drives joint advocacy, research, communications, peer-to-peer learning, network building and feminist organisational capacity strengthening across all WAVE partner organisations for amplified collective impact.

While the WAVE program has formally come to an end, it leaves a powerful legacy for women's rights organisations and movements in Asia and the Pacific. We look forward to building on the transformative change that WAVE made possible.

IWDA acknowledges the commitment, support and flexible funding from the Government of the Netherlands for this five year program, which has made our achievements possible. Thank you.





Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

WAVE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

IWDA is committed to ongoing, long term partnership with women's organisations in Asia and the Pacific region. IWDA works to provide capacity strengthening tools, resources and accompaniment that supports WAVE partners to be more effective and resilient.

WAVE's model of strategic feminist engagement means the program has been built on women's own strategies and capacities, and applies a feminist approach to analysis and problem solving.

Through WAVE, IWDA worked in partnership with 18 women's rights organisations in Cambodia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. IWDA works by supporting programs and initiatives that are devised by local women and organisations working for change, knowing that women are stronger together and local knowledge drives long-term solutions.

MYANMAR

Akhaya Women Shan Women's Network (SWAN) Ta'ang Women's Organisation (TWO) Women's Initiative Platform (WIP) Women's League of Burma (WLB)



Amara Banteay Srei Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC) United Sisterhood Alliance (US)

Asisténsia Legál Ba Feto No Labarik (ALFeLa) Alola Foundation Rede Feto



SOLOMON ISLANDS

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Women's Rights Action Network (WRAM) West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association (WARA

AUSTRALIA

International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)

WAVE THEORY OF CHANGE

INDIVIDUALS

Individual women's leadership influences political, economic and social decisions

8

WOMEN LEAD TRANSFORMATIVE, SUSTAINABLE CHANGE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY, ENABLED BY STRATEGIC FEMINIST ENGAGEMENT



POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS Power-holders and institutions are

> responsive to and accountable for women's rights and status



WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS)

A vital, visible and vocal women's movement aggregates and amplifies women's power and priorities

RESEARCH, EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

Evidence of how change towards gender equality happens informs individuals, institutions and movements

4

COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR CHANGE

HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF THE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF WAVE FROM 2016 TO 2020, DRAWING ON THE PROGRAM'S WORK ACROSS INDIVIDUAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, MOVEMENTS, SYSTEMIC CHANGE AND RESEARCH AND LEARNING. THE BELOW DATA IS FOR THE FULL FIVE YEARS OF THE PROGRAM.

6,303

WOMEN ASSUMING LEADERSHIP Roles at local, national And/or regional levels

13,191

COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED THROUGH MALE Advocates for gender Equality

27%

INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP Base for Umbrella groups And Networks operating In wave

26,744

WOMEN ACCESSED TRAINING AND SUPPORT IN LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

81%

58

OF WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN LEADERSHIP SKILLS INTERVENTIONS WHO REPORTED INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND NEW SKILLS

EXAMPLES OF DEDICATED

ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES.

INCLUDING FOR THE

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

6,463

WOMEN SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE SUPPORTED

100%

OF ALL WAVE PARTNERS REPORTED HIGH OR VERY HIGH ABILITY TO 'COMMIT AND ENGAGE' BY THE END OF THE PROGRAM

2,366 YOUNG WOMEN ENGAGED

YOUNG WOMEN ENGAGED IN LEADERSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

STRATEGIC FEMINIST ENGAGEMENT

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WAVE's goal was for diverse women to be equally represented as leaders at all levels of society and to be able to use this power to drive systemic change toward gender equality.

Over five years, WAVE brought about sustainable change in four key pillars: supporting women's individual leadership; making political and governance systems work for women; strengthening women's organisations and movements; and building evidence on women's lives, priorities and leadership.

Vibrant and autonomous feminist movements are the cornerstone to transformative, sustainable change towards gender equality. WAVE sought avenues for collaboration and building common goals and objectives across communities, women's organisations, networks and coalitions, primarily for the purpose of building women's voice and leadership in influencing duty bearers, at the community, national or higher levels. Strengthening the governance mechanisms and organisational systems of WAVE partners as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) was a pivotal first step to collective power. WAVE facilitated resources and attention to WAVE partners' organisational evolution as civil society organisations.

WAVE's model of strategic feminist engagement meant the program was built on women's own strategies and capacities, and used a feminist approach to analysis and problem solving.

Under Pillar 1 of the program, partners led on initiatives to support women's political and civil leadership, responded to violence against women, empowered young women, and supported male engagement activities. Under Pillar 2, WAVE partners worked on policy and legal reform and community campaigning activities to support gender equality. Under Pillar 3, the WAVE program supported networking and collective action amongst women's rights organisations to strengthen movements, and partners engaged in organisational strengthening. Under Pillar 4, partners with IWDA undertook collaborative research and evidence building initiatives. The pillars of the program are featured in the following pages.

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WOMEN'S Leadership

Women have the right to influence decisions that affect their lives but are drastically underrepresented in leadership at all levels of society.

WAVE's goal was for individual women's leadership to influence political, economic and social decision making.

Barriers to women's leadership include physical and sexual violence, conservative beliefs about women's roles, structural inequality, and lack of funding for women-led organising.

WAVE worked with young women, women candidates, community and private sector leaders, and Women Human Rights Defenders to ensure women had the necessary support and opportunities to lead.

WAVE enhanced women's capabilities and confidence to be effective leaders and influence political, economic and social decisions. This was done through training, campaign funding, mentoring, strengthening Women Human Rights Defenders networks, building leadership succession pathways, and shifting attitudes of society and decision makers about the value of women's leadership, including working with male advocates. WAVE supported individual women, while working to create an enabling environment for women to take on leadership roles.

WAVE also supported women-led action to prevent and respond to violence against women. This was to ensure women can live a life free of fear and have the necessary support and opportunities to lead.

Between 2016 and 2020, WAVE supported increasing numbers of women to achieve positions of leadership, with 6,303 women

securing leadership roles over the five years. Focusing on women's long-term pathways and journeys to leadership - whether in the formal or civil spheres - was an important component of WAVE. Supported by findings from the Women's Pathways to Leadership research (see page 14), WAVE invested significantly in long-term coaching, training and peer-to-peer learning for current and potential women leaders. Over the five years of the program, partners in five countries reached 26,774 women with skills development activities. Examples of partners' work are included in the country focus pages of this report. This includes: SWAN's Emerging Women Leaders Training and WIP's residential leadership training program in Myanmar; Myanmar's first campaign coaching program for women political candidates; an exchange program for women parliamentarians from Timor-Leste; support by partners in Papua New Guinea (PNG) for women to be appointed to a range of local government committees, including ward development committees, law and order committees and to stand for election; and training and coaching for women candidates and women civil society leaders by Cambodia partners GADC, Amara and Banteay Srei.

Recognising the key role that young women play in the future of democracy and advancing women's empowerment, partners in five countries had a particular focus on supporting young women to develop their skills and capabilities to lead in political, social and economic spheres, engaging with 2,366 young women over the five years. Partners implemented young women's leadership training programs in PNG, Cambodia and Myanmar (BWF, VfC, WBCA, Banteay Srei, TWO, SWAN); internship programs within government offices in Cambodia (GADC) and with political parties in Myanmar (TWO, SWAN); and youth citizen groups (GADC).



Supporting and resourcing the leadership of diverse young women is crucial to achieving gender equality and the sustainability of the women's rights movement. As part of WAVE, a young women's leadership strategy was developed which recommends five approaches for organisations to best support young women. This was further explored in 2020 with the development of a young women's video codesigned and managed by young women activists from Cambodia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Samoa. Young women shared their stories of marginalisation and leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic through a dedicated Facebook group, WhatsApp messages and interviews with IWDA. IWDA then worked closely with a group of young women leaders to weave these stories together into an animation that showcased their diverse experiences, stories and the change they wanted to see. The call in the video is clear: stand with us, work with us, and support young women who are stepping up. The video is available on the IWDA website.

WAVE ENHANCED WOMEN'S CAPABILITIES AND CONFIDENCE TO BE EFFECTIVE LEADERS AND INFLUENCE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DECISIONS. WAVE also focused on women's freedom from violence, as violence and related harmful gender norms and practices continue to inhibit women's participation in leadership across WAVE countries. Between 2016 and 2020, 6,463 women survivors of violence received information and support from WAVE partners across Cambodia, Myanmar, PNG and Timor-Leste. In addition, three safe houses in Cambodia and one safe house in PNG received supported.

WAVE partners learned and shared with each other, which informed their programs. For example, as a result of a number of male engagement learning and partner exchanges involving six partners, TWO established a genderbased violence (GBV) prevention network which covered 15 Ta'ang villages across three townships in northern Shan State in Myanmar. This model is based on the successful 'men's network' model devised by Banteay Srei in Cambodia, which engages men to act as positive role models and intervene to support other men in the community as a means to prevent and reduce violence. GADC in Cambodia also took a key focus in supporting male engagement activities, through their Cambodian Men's Network. Across all partners, 13,191 community members were reached through the work of male advocates between 2016 and 2020.

PILLAR 2:

MAKING POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS Work for women

WAVE's goal was for power holders and institutions to be responsive to and accountable for women's rights and status.

As women's rights organisations face closing civil spaces and increased pushback against human rights and feminist agendas, a strategic and transformative advocacy response to ensure that power holders are accountable to women is more critical than ever.

WAVE took a women's rights approach to advocacy, based on the premise that to be successful, advocacy must recognise unequal power relations and structures that oppress women and girls. It must also recognise that women face intersecting discriminations based on multiple layers of identity that shape women's individual experiences.

WAVE's targeted advocacy led to policy and legislative reform and contributed to substantial outcomes towards gender equality. These included changes in legislation and policy towards gender equality, particularly in relation to women's participation and representation in government. Examples are provided in the country pages of this report, with some cases in point provided here. This includes significant progress in passing Temporary Special Measures (TSM) by Provincial Governments, led by the lobbying work of WRAM in Solomon Islands. In Myanmar, WAVE partners strategically engaged with political parties to increase the opportunities for women as party members and political candidates. Advocacy by WAVE partners TWO and SWAN contributed to two political parties committing to a minimum of 30% of candidates for preselection being women, as well as committing to quotas for women in leadership positions and on party committees.

Partners' monitoring and reporting on governments' performance against their obligations aimed to improve gender equality outcomes. WAVE supported partners' efforts to hold governments to account for their responsibilities in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and for other international commitments (such as those in relation to the Beijing Platform for Action (B+25) and the Sustainable Development Goals).

In PNG, WAVE partners developed a joint submission for the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission review of electoral laws advocating for TSMs at both the national and local level. Partners subsequently undertook advocacy about TSMs with local duty bearers and peer organisations in four different provinces.

In Myanmar, WAVE supported the formation of the ground-breaking CEDAW Alliance in 2016. This was the first mechanism in Myanmar to formally unite the country's four national women's rights networks for joint policy advocacy, including WAVE partner the Women's League of Burma (WLB). In an environment of shrinking space for advocacy in Myanmar, this is a remarkable achievement. The Alliance continues to undertake advocacy about Myanmar's CEDAW commitments across the country's regions.* WAVE partner Akhaya played a central role in advocating to the Myanmar Government for amendments to the *Prevention and Protection of Violence Against Women Bill* to ensure its compliance with CEDAW.

COVID-19 and the measures taken in response to the pandemic have caused enormous damage to local communities across Asia and the Pacific, with existing social inequalities, particularly violence

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against women, being greatly exacerbated. In response, WAVE partners used their advocacy skills and networks to pivot their collective voice and messages to raise duty-bearer awareness on the gendered impacts of the pandemic. In Myanmar, WAVE partners strategically engaged with local authorities to increase ethnic minority and rural women's ability to protect their health and sustain livelihoods. In PNG, partners and IWDA prepared a submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women detailing how the pandemic has led to an increase in violence against women in their communities, and reduced women's ability to seek help.

WAVE'S TARGETED ADVOCACY LED TO POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE REFORM AND CONTRIBUTED TO SUBSTANTIAL OUTCOMES TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY.

WAVE partners brought considerable advocacy skills to the program, which they were able to further develop with the support and resources provided by WAVE. Support to partners included advocacy campaign materials and technical assistance, including advocacy planning workshops and working with partners to develop tools and resources. Under WAVE, IWDA worked with Womankind Worldwide to produce the *Plan Your Power: A Toolkit for Women's Rights Advocacy Planning*, a comprehensive resource for advocacy planning. In 2020, the toolkit was adapted to a set of online interactive modules. Many of the tools and exercises in the *Plan Your Power Toolkit* emerged from activities undertaken across the life of WAVE. This will be a resource and set of online modules will support women's rights organisations well beyond the life of the program.

WAVE also supported work across partners in response to shared goals such as convening spaces where partners learned from each other about different advocacy approaches and prepared for joint advocacy in national and international forums. This included a joint advocacy campaign on women's leadership, Our Voice, between 2018 and 2020, involving all 18 partners. Together, partners developed joint messages demanding action to increase women's effective participation in local decision-making. These messages were amplified when partners participated in International Women's Day events each year, as well as during attendance at the Pacific Feminist Forum, International Rural Women's Day, International Day of Peace and mobilising for action during the 16 Days of Activism campaigns. Across the life of the program, WAVE supported 58 joint advocacy initiatives with the creation of 16,000 campaign materials and briefs in local languages. Further, WAVE partners reached more than 52,586 people with messaging through the WAVE Our Voice campaign on women's leadership, as well as through events such as International Women's Day and 16 Days of Activism.

PILLAR 3:

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND MOVEMENTS

WAVE's goal was a vital, visible and vocal women's movement that aggregated and amplified women's power and priorities.

Some of the most important advances in women's rights have been secured through the efforts of women's movements. Women's movements hold decision makers and governance systems accountable, while also challenging gender stereotypes and shifting perceptions about women's leadership.

WAVE provided long-term, flexible and core funding to women's rights organisations over the program's life, which is one of the most effective ways to strengthen women's movements and ensure women's participation and leadership is enabled to create transformative change toward gender equality.

Women's rights organisations play a vital role in reaching women in marginalised communities and amplifying the voice of those denied power. Supporting and resourcing women's rights organisations and networks is particularly important in contexts where women and women's organisations are facing increasing backlash.

WAVE's support to rural women, women in multiple ethnic minority groups, conflict-affected women, sex workers, garment workers, and farmers provided space for critical reflection on gender issues and a platform to express their ideas. WAVE partners facilitated grassroots groups to form, learn together, and organise themselves to lead their own actions. By the end of WAVE, women participants had stronger abilities to self-organise and lead collective action on their own behalf. WAVE partners increased the strength of alliances and coalitions of civil society actors, pressing dutybearers for more gender-responsive policies and services. The WAVE program actively encouraged partners to build their networks, coalitions, and alliances for the purposes of expanding the voice and strength of the messages of change. There is strength in numbers and in solidarity among members. Between 2016 and 2020, WAVE supported 1,265 women to organise in national and regional networks, coalitions and convening activities.

WAVE's flexible funding supported spaces where partners could convene as needed and allowed WAVE partners to broker collaborations with a wide variety of other civil society organisations they pressed for action by local, district, provincial or national government institutions.

The alliances represented diverse issues and membership from a larger geographic spread, supporting participation from remote and rural areas. Over the program, membership of alliances grew by 27%. Furthermore, some WAVE partners advocated for their alliance agendas and processes to be more inclusive. In action, partners amended their agendas to incorporate issues faced by the most marginalised of member constituents, such as the rights of people with disabilities, sex workers or people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual people.

WAVE supported partners' thinking and practices towards a movement 'mindset'. Most partners brought a long history of working for gender equality and human rights, but for some, the idea of being part of a movement was new territory. For other partners who self-identified as activists and



feminists, it was an essential component of their organisational identity. Working together towards joint outcomes shifted partners' understanding and perception about what their role in movements should be, with these new ideas influencing their practice.

WAVE PARTNERS INCREASED THE STRENGTH OF ALLIANCES AND COALITIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS, PRESSING DUTY-BEARERS FOR MORE GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICIES AND SERVICES.

All WAVE partners brought significant organisational strengths to WAVE. Building on those strengths, the WAVE program made strategic time and resource investments for capacity-building opportunities for WAVE partner staff. In 2016, WAVE partners completed fouryear capacity-strengthening plans, and IWDA introduced the *Feminist Organisational Capacity Strengthening* (FOCS) program. FOCS is a suite of tools and resources, to guide women's rights community organisations through reflection and self-assessment to enhance organisational strength and capability.

Over the five years of the program, WAVE provided opportunities for all WAVE partner staff to build organisational and technical skills through training workshops and provided teams with guidance materials and resources. In 2019, the WAVE all partner workshop was hosted by renowned feminist activist and scholar Srilatha Batliwala, to learn about power, patriarchy, feminist leadership and strengthening movements for change, to enhance the program's effectiveness and transformational approach.

Representatives from all WAVE partners were invited to three strategic learning workshops, which facilitated discussion across all partners. Learning workshops focused on operational processes, strategy planning, monitoring and evaluation, financial reporting, or specific content areas such as movement built feminist organisational capacity, and to systematise safety and security, and increased access for young leaders. The WAVE approach to capacity building resulted in a significant increase in partner's organisational capacities. By 2020 100% of WAVE partners described their capacity as "high" or "very high," compared with 21% in 2016.

PILLAR 4:

BUILDING EVIDENCE ON Women's Lives, priorities And leadership

There is a significant evidence and information gap on women's pathways into leadership in the Asia Pacific region and the actions required to increase women's full participation at decisionmaking levels.

The lack of data on women's leadership is a concern as it masks trends on women's representation at decision-making levels. Further, traditional research methods often neglect women's voice and priorities. WAVE has taken a feminist participatory approach to research, aiming to strengthen partner capacity while collecting data that values women's voice and priorities.

Public Perceptions of Women as Political Leaders research project

The Public Perceptions of Women as Political Leaders research project took place in Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands in 2018-19. The purpose of the research was to better understand perceptions of women as political leaders, and gender norms associated with these perceptions. The research in each country consisted of a survey with community members followed by interviews and focus groups. Although there are important differences between the countries, there were some common findings. The research suggests that, while there is widespread support for gender equality as a principle, gender norms still affect women's opportunities in leadership, particularly at the local level. Expectations of women in political leadership are much higher and harder to meet than those of men and informal barriers to women's leadership are not always well understood. WAVE partners in each country produced a research report, and a cross-country synthesis report drawing on findings from all three countries is also available. Women's rights organisations in these countries are now actively drawing on the research findings in their work towards increasing women's participation in political leadership.

Women's Leadership Pathways research project

Twelve partners took part in participatory research with women leaders and aspiring leaders in economic, social and political spheres, as part of the <u>Women's Leadership Pathways</u> study. This three-year collaborative, feminist research project sought to contribute to an enhanced understanding of women's individual leadership journeys and experiences, as well as the enabling factors and obstacles that affect women's leadership experiences. Findings from the study also provided evidence on the success factors and barriers for leadership to support partners' programming and advocacy strategies.

The study's participatory approach engaged WAVE partner organisation staff as co-researchers, to develop research tools, conduct interviews, collect and analyse data, and produce findings that illuminate diverse women's motivations for leadership and any positive factors that support and sustain them.

Findings suggested that critical success factors for women being able to take on leadership positions include: a supportive household environment, namely through the specific support and encouragement of their spouse; women's immediate family and community being supportive, including neighbours, local communities; men who are in positions of authority in the local community progressing a gender empowerment agenda; and in the Pacific, the church's support of women's leadership is crucial.

In 2020, the Women's Leadership Pathways project focused on research into action, with the development of a suite of communications and advocacy materials, prepared with the support of IWDA under the direction of partner strategy and interests. This included the full report translated, advocacy briefs to support the dissemination of research findings, and an innovative snakes and ladders board game to communicate the core research messages in an accessible form to grassroots audiences.



Creating Equitable South-North Partnerships research project

The final research project within the WAVE program took place in 2020, under the title 'Creating Equitable South-North Partnerships: Nurturing the Vā and Voyaging the Audacious Ocean Together.' The purpose of this research was to understand the views and experiences of global south women's rights movement actors on the role and behaviour of global north organisations, with a focus on women's movements in Oceania. The research was led by highly respected Oceanic feminist and storyteller 'Ofa-Ki-Levuka Guttenbeil-Likiliki, and involved interviews with 35 women's rights activists. The research documents some successes but also many challenges in south-north dynamics and proposes the re-setting of relationships based on enabling global south power, nurturing relationships and decolonising existing practices. The report offers a model for authentic partnership between global south women's movements and global north organisations.

Context specific evidence building

Partners' participation in research projects provided team members with skills, confidence, critical consciousness, and added credibility to their advocacy work. WAVE partners hosted many shared convening spaces, bringing together a diverse set of stakeholders which enabled cross-learning and cross-collaboration with in-country networks. The participatory feminist research methods used by several partners resulted in ownership of the findings by community members, who subsequently led the process of presenting their findings to government officials.

In each country, partners committed time and energy under WAVE funding to their research and learning to assess program successes and lessons and adjust their plans and strategies. This resulted in programming based on real-time informations. In Myanmar, SWAN analysed what worked to generate women's confidence, mutual support and leadership in isolated, rural communities which were under threat from armed conflict and political strife, and what they still need to do to get women leaders to the state level. SWAN also built data collection and analysis skills among their constituents and trainees and tracked and used data from and about their social media followers to assess how their messages are reaching the public, partners, and journalists.

Joint research and learning at country-level was particularly useful for advocacy. For example, collaborative efforts across organisations with diverse mandates provided a much richer set of data that could be used for influencing. In Timor-Leste, Alola and ALFeLa collaborated closely with Rede Feto and the broader network of stakeholders to document and utilise details of cases of Human Trafficking and violence against women and girls for advocacy. The close collaboration built on each partner's strength. Service delivery organisations like ALFeLa, identified trends in their clients' cases and advocacy partners turned the data into reports, social media campaigns and letters to lawmakers. As a result, Rede Feto was able to produce joint reports/submissions with up to date data and submit cases to the Ministry of Justice to advocate for improved services.

WAVE partners built the capacities of their community members to conduct their own research, document and lift up the stories of women, using the resulting evidence for influence and advocacy on their own behalf. United Sisterhood Alliance member Women's Network for Unity in Cambodia facilitated the voices of women sex workers to speak their truth in advocacy and influencing spaces. Sex worker and garment factory worker representatives documented their own stories and experiences and brought those to national policy discussions, dialogues, and forums.

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ល្បែះ6ដីឡីអារស្ល_{ាលន្} Art For Change MESSAGER BAND-MB COMP 201 The WAVE program supported 18 women's rights organisations across five countries in Asia and the Pacific: Cambodia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands.

WAVE is an example of IWDA's sustainable and transformative partnership approach. IWDA's role in the WAVE program was as ally, strategist, convenor, funder and partner at regional and international levels.

WAVE partners, with IWDA, have driven joint advocacy, research, communications, peer to peer learning, network building and feminist organisational capacity strengthening for amplified collective impact.

IWDA works by supporting programs and initiatives that are devised by local women and organisations working for change, because women are strong together and local knowledge drives long-term solutions.

In each of the five WAVE countries, program partners developed and led local solutions and initiatives. Across the five years of the program, their outcomes were strong and diverse. The following pages are a snap shot of some of the key achievements in each country context.

IWDA'S ROLE IN THE WAVE PROGRAM WAS AS ALLY, STRATEGIST, CONVENOR, FUNDER AND PARTNER AT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS.

PARTICIPANTS AT THE 2019 WAVE ALL-PARTNER Workshop in Cambodia. Photo: Simon Toffanello

COUNTRY FOCUS:

CAMBODIA

WAVE supported four partners in Cambodia. Amara focused on women's political leadership and participation in decision making in community platforms. Banteay Srei promoted gender equality and women's leadership, and also focused on community-based prevention and intervention on violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the inclusion of women with disabilities. Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC) supported programming for gender equality, grassroots attitude change, women's political and civil leadership, male engagement, and conducted a community of practice that supported emerging women leaders from the government and community sectors. United Sisterhood Alliance (Us) is an alliance of four local women organisations. It includes Worker's Information Center, supporting the empowerment of women garment workers: Women's Network for Unity. supporting a network of sex workers to organise on the right to work and access to social services and social justice; The Messenger Band, an activist band using performance to raise awareness of women's rights; and Social Action for Community and Development, which supports research, policy analysis, and advocacy of grassroots groups.

During the Commune Council elections in 2017, there was a 1% decrease in the number of women elected to Commune Council positions at the national level. However, in the provinces in which WAVE partners supported women candidates, there was a 1.35% increase in the number of women elected. Three partners provided support (coaching, mentoring, training) to 247 women candidates, of whom 107 (43%), achieved elected office. As part of the 2017 Commune Council election campaign period, Amara delivered financial campaign support to 44 women candidates from Cambodia's two major political parties who received a small cash grant of USD125 to support their electoral campaign (such as support with transportation to reach communities, phone credit). Of those women, 29 women or 65% were successfully elected as commune councillors, with four elected as First Deputy Chief. Amara also worked with government leaders to successfully advocate for commune councils' increased commitment to women's issues and priorities in their Commune Investment Plans. In 2018, 26 communes across four districts in Siem Reap province agreed to allocate a minimum of 20% of funds to support gender-related work.

In 2017 and 2018, there was a significant decline in Cambodian democracy, including suppression of civic space. NGOs perceived to be politically active, including WAVE partners, were under great scrutiny. During this time, Us adapted activities from large scale organising to smaller community events. This included initiating music caravans to a number of provinces to raise awareness on social issues and building engagement with local commune councils. In 2018, GADC and Banteay Srei shifted their focus to women's civic leadership, given it is less scrutinized than political leadership. Partners also shifted to 'closed door' advocacy, by building good relationships with local authorities and key allies in ministries, including through informal communications. Through building those relationships, partners were able to influence allies in other areas. This included GADC working with civil society agencies through its Gender and Development Network (GADNET) platform to advance amendment to the regressive law on domestic violence in 2018. Moreover, between 2016 and 2020, the GADNET network grew from 30 members to 44 members.

WAVE PARTNERS IN CAMBODIA INCREASED WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, ADVOCATED FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ITS GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENTS AND STRENGTHENED WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE ACTION

In 2019, GADC, Us and Banteay Srei collaborated to submit three NGO shadow reports to the CEDAW Committee and attended the 74th Session of the Committee in Geneva. Partners worked with their constituents to identify their priorities which included labour violations, exploitation and violence experienced by garment workers and sex workers, and the impact of predatory loans on rural women. Recommendations from the shadow reports were integrated into the CEDAW Committee's Concluding Observations.

In 2020, GADC significantly influenced the draft Gender Equality Policy developed by Cambodia's Ministry of Women's Affairs through the collective efforts of GADNET. All 23 of GADNET's recommendations were accepted.

Us, via WNU, offered safe spaces for sex workers to meet. This resulted in sex workers becoming aware of their rights and learning how to engage with local authorities to demand changes in government policies and practices. The inaugural National Sex Workers Forum in 2019, facilitated dialogue between duty bearers and sex workers to discuss sex workers' rights.

Recognising that addressing the root causes of gender based violence requires social norms changes around men's attitudes and behaviour related to violence, GADC's Cambodian Men's Network promoted positive masculinity at the community level. Between 2016 and 2020, GADC engaged 805 male advocates who reached 1,285 men in three provinces.

In 2020, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, partners revised activities to respond to the challenging context and specific needs of women. Banteay Srei managed increased cases of violence against women and girls and advocated to local authorities to provide information about violence response services with COVID-19 prevention messages. Amara and GADC maintained online training. Us launched a research report on the impacts of COVID-19 on sex workers, garment workers, farmers and youth. The findings were presented to national government officials in order to demand responsive policies and support systems inclusive of vulnerable women and children. **POPULATION**

15,288,489

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

20% (25/125) IN THE LOWER HOUSE AND 16% (10/62) IN THE UPPER HOUSE OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT (2018).²

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

9% (2015)

GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX

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CIVICUS MONITOR

REPRESSED (2020)

WAVE PARTNERS

AMARA, BANTEAY SREI, GENDER AND Development for Cambodia (Gadc) And United Sisterhood Alliance (US)

National Institute of Statistics Ministry of Planning (2019). General Population Census of the Kingdom of
Cambodia 2019, Provisional Population Totals. Kingdom of Cambodia; Cambodia.

COUNTRY FOCUS:

MYANMAR

WAVE 5 YEAR REPORT 2016-2020

Over the course of the WAVE program, Myanmar was in a transitional phase to democracy. The military occupied 25% of seats in Myanmar's parliament.* Armed conflict between the military and ethnic armed groups continued in numerous parts of the country. The democratic rights of several ethnic minorities–particularly the Rohingya–continued to be denied.

WAVE supported five partners in Myanmar. Akhaya Women supports women's empowerment through individual and experiential learning to develop leadership skills. Shan Women's Network (SWAN) is a network of Shan women actively working towards gender equality and justice for Shan women through communitybased action, research and advocacy. Women's Initiative Platform (WIP) works towards full and equitable participation of women in public life. including formal politics and peace processes. Ta'ang Women's Organisation (TWO) is a network of women from the Ta'ang ethnic minority group that advances Ta'ang women's human rights. Women's League of Burma (WLB) is a federation of 13 ethnic women rights organisations working towards the advancement of the status of women for a peaceful, just and democratic union.

In November 2020, the country held its second democratic election. Sophisticated advocacy and sustained pressure from Myanmar's feminist movement resulting in a record number of women contested the election and a 28% increase in women elected. WAVE partners supported the election campaigns of progressive, ethnically diverse women, and also supported women once elected to increase their voice and influence.

WIP piloted an innovative, non-partisan election campaign coaching model, the first of its kind in Myanmar. WIP trained a pool of campaign coaches and then paired each coach with a prospective candidate (from the same party) for individualised support over a period of two years. Of the 14 women participants, 13 were successfully preselected by their political parties to contest the 2020 general election. Women candidates reported increased skills in engaging with constituents and also increased personal resilience as a result of having a consistent ally as a campaign coach. Four women candidates were successfully elected. WIP also experienced an increase in demand from political parties for WIP's women's leadership training programs.

Akhaya Women delivered Myanmar's first nonpartisan, structured political mentoring program for women Members of Parliament (MPs). Myanmar women MPs with a commitment to gender equality were matched with Australian women MPs with a similar commitment. In the 2020 election, eight out of the nine participating MPs who re-contested the election were successfully re-elected. The program evaluation found the Myanmar MPs: achieved increased influence within their political parties; strengthened their practical political skills; gained greater resilience and resolve to achieve their own political objectives; established stronger networks with the Myanmar women's rights movement and made some progress towards promoting gender equality legislation. The Australian MPs gained cross-cultural communications skills and contributed to stronger political ties between Myanmar and Australia.

SWAN organised women's exchanges for over 600 rural ethnic minority women per year in three northern states in Myanmar, all affected by armed conflict. SWAN recognised that most rural women had never before had the opportunity to meet together, to learn about gender equality issues, to laugh and provide mutual respect to each other. These women's exchanges provided an entry point into critical consciousness building.

* The political situation in Myanmar declined in devastating ways in early 2021, with the military coup and ensuing violence against peaceful protesters.

MYANMAR PARTNERS FOCUSSED ON ADVANCING WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. **PARTNERS CONTRIBUTED TO A 28% INCREASE** IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ELECTED AT THE **2020 NATIONAL ELECTION.**

As a result, women who were typically excluded from community discussion and decision spaces are more confident in negotiating and problemsolving and are viewed with more respect by others.

Following strategic advocacy by SWAN, in 2019 the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) became the first Myanmar political party to implement a 30% gender quota. The SNLD pre-selected almost 30% women candidates at the 2020 election. This was a significant milestone for Myanmar. Further, by 2020 almost all of the SNLD township level Executive Committees had at least 30% women position holders. In the lead up to 2020 election, SWAN provided strategic social media support to 30 women candidates, 9 of whom were successful.

TWO piloted Myanmar's first political party internship program for young women. The internships provided young women from TWO's network the opportunity to demonstrate their strong leadership capabilities to the Ta'ang National Party. TWO leveraged the internship program to strengthen ties to the Ta'ang National Party and successfully advocate for gender equality reforms to the party's constitution.

WLB focused on nation-wide policy reform as an active member of the Myanmar CEDAW Alliance. The alliance united the country's four national women's rights networks. The Alliance targeted advocacy efforts at state and regional level parliamentarians, taking advantage of the broad reach of Alliance members across Myanmar. Akhaya effectively collaborated with MPs in the mentoring program to advocate for a comprehensive Prevention of Violence against Women Bill.

All partners developed community awareness campaigns to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. A number of partners responded to the dramatic increase in rates of domestic violence during the pandemic. TWO modified its crisis support service model to provide increased online support to women experiencing violence. Akhaya supported the women MPs in the mentoring program to lead gender-sensitive COVID-19 response initiatives in their consistencies.

POPULATION

51,486,253 (2014)³

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

11.5%

AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.⁴ AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, LESS THAN 1% OF WARD/VILLAGE TRACT ADMINISTRATORS ARE WOMEN.⁵

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

11% (2016)

GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX

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REPRESSED (2020)

WAVE PARTNERS

<u>Akhaya Women, shan Women's Action Network</u> (SWAN). TA'ANG WOMEN'S ORGANISATION (TWO). WOMEN'S INITIATIVE PLATFORM (WIP) AND WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF BURMA (WLB)

- Department of Population, Ministry of Immigration and Population (2015). The 2014 Myz Population and Housing Census, The Union Report, Census Report Volume 2. Ministry o and Sports, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Myanmar.
- PIP Parline, 2020. Global data on national parliament, Myanmar House of Represen [ONLINE]. https://data.jpu.org/women-ranking?month=10&year=2020 Retrieved 18 December 2020. Results from the 2020 election are yet to be included. 5 EMReF, 2020, Gender and Local Politics in Myanmar: Women's and Men's Participation In Ward Village Tract And Village Decision Making.

COUNTRY FOCUS:

TIMOR-LESTE

The WAVE program in Timor-Leste is supported by three partners. **Asisténsia Legál Ba Feto No Labarik (ALFeLa)** supports women and children in Timor-Leste to access a fair and formal justice system without discrimination through legal aid, legal education and advocacy. **Alola Foundation** focuses on women's leadership and advocacy, focusing on raising awareness of sexual violence against women and girls and access to maternal and child health, education and literacy and economic development. **Rede Feto** is a network of organisations in Timor-Leste promoting gender equality and women's empowerment through advocacy, networking and capacity building.

ALFeLa is the country's only provider of legal aid to survivors of violence against women and girls, supporting an average of 350 new clients per year. ALFeLa provided legal education training focused on laws relating to women's rights, especially the Law Against Domestic Violence and the Antihuman Trafficking Law with leaders including Police, village leaders and community members. ALFeLa promoted the formal justice system, as many family violence matters were resolved in the traditional justice system. Additionally, all WAVE partners in Timor-Leste are members of the 'Rede Referral' network that supports survivors of violence against women and girls to access appropriate response services.

Alola supports potential women candidates through social norms change at the household and community level. In the lead-up to the locallevel elections in 2016/2017, Alola worked with male family members of those women who wished to stand for election to ensure support and commitment within the household. At the community-level, Alola built a pathway for women's leadership through initially focussing on local level leadership before shifting to focus on municipallevel government and connected potential women leaders with women MPs at the national level for learning and exchange. WAVE leveraged the support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to support an MP exchange program in 2019. Six women MPs from Timor-Leste visited Australia and were linked to six counterpart Australian MPs. The program aimed to strengthen Timorese women MPs capacity and influence, including as women's rights advocates.

With IWDA, Alola led on the delivery of the <u>Public</u> <u>Perceptions of Women as Political Leaders in Timor-Leste</u> research project between 2018 and 2020, as well as participating in the <u>Women's Leadership</u> <u>Pathways</u> research. These research projects informed Alola's advocacy and approaches to support more women into leadership roles at the sub-national and local-level elections, planned for 2021 and 2023 respectively.

Rede Feto hosted National Women's Congresses to convene a broad group of stakeholders to develop common advocacy platforms. The resulting Platform of Action in 2019 demonstrated a significant shift from previous years. It has a stronger feminist analysis and calls for a focus on progressive issues including women's participation in decision-making, sexual and reproductive rights and social protections for marginalised groups. The Platform of Action provides the road map for collective action for women's right advocacy for the upcoming five years to government officers. As a result of Rede Feto expanding its reach to civil society organisations, Rede Feto doubled its member organisations from 2016 to 2020 from 24 to 48 organisations.

All three WAVE partners collaborated with several civil society organisations to successfully advocate for amendment of the 2016 Suco Election Law to

WAVE PARTNERS SUCCESSFULLY CAMPAIGNED FOR CHANGES IN LEGISLATION THAT INCREASED THE NUMBER OF WOMEN LEADERS AND WOMEN'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE

ensure greater opportunities for women to stand as candidates in village elections. WAVE funding and technical support contributed to the 100% I'm Ready campaign, with WAVE partner organisations training women leaders to build their confidence and capacity to stand for election. This resulted in a 20-fold increase in women candidates, with double the number of women elected as Village chiefs in the 2016 elections (from 2.5% to 5%).

Rede Feto's collaboration with Alola and ALFeLa was instrumental in the Prevention of Human Trafficking Law passing in 2017. The WAVE partners worked collaboratively together with other civil society organisations as part of the Human Trafficking Working Group, and documented details of cases of human trafficking and violence against women and girls to inform their advocacy. The Working Group lobbied Members of Parliament who were keen to get the Law passed during their current term, in the lead-up to the 2017 national election. The recommendations of the Working Group were submitted to the Women's Caucus and Commission of the National Parliament and were incorporated into the Law, which was approved and rolled out in 2017. As a result of the collaboration, Rede Feto produced joint reports and submissions with up to date data and submitted cases to the Ministry of Justice. Alola and ALFeLa are now involved in socialising Law at district and communitylevels and are collaborating with other women's rights organisations in joint advocacy for the establishment of a National Action Plan.

Rede Feto reported that COVID-19 resulted in increased cases of violence against women and girls and increased economic dependence of women on men and loss of income. Rede Feto contributed to government efforts to communicate individual hygiene and COVID-19 prevention measures.

<u>POPULATION</u> 1,240,000

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

38% (26 OF 65) MPS. AT THE SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL, LESS THAN 5% OF CHIEFS ARE WOMEN.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

41.8% (2008) TENTH HIGHEST GLOBALLY

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<u>CIVICUS MONITOR</u>

WAVE PARTNERS

ASISTÉNSIA LEGAL BA FETO NO LABARIK (Alfela), fundasaun alola (Alola) And Rede Feto

COUNTRY FOCUS:

SOLOMON ISLANDS

In the Solomon Islands, WAVE supported **Women's Right's Action Movement (WRAM)**, a non-government organisation promoting gender equality, focusing on the need to reform laws and policies. WRAM focuses on promoting women's decision-making and leadership, eliminating violence against women and girls and women's economic empowerment. WRAM collaborates with the women's rights movement in Solomon Islands. West 'Are'Are Rokotanikeni Association (WARA) an indigenous women's savings organisation - was also engaged in the WAVE program's <u>Women's Leadership Pathways</u> research project and

Women's political representation in Solomon Islands, at both the national and provincial levels, is low. Since the country gained independence in 1978, only four women have been elected as members of the National Parliament, and only ten women elected to Provincial Assemblies. Data from previous provincial elections in 2019 is a similar picture, with only eight women winning a seat across 200 Provincial Government Assembly seats since independence.

movement strengthening activities.

WAVE supported WRAM to advocate for gender quotas known as Temporary Special Measures (TSM), to lift the current rate of 2% of women in the National Parliament's lower house. Temporary Special Measures can include quotas and seats reserved for women and have increased women's political leadership globally. Of the 47 countries in the world with 30% or more women's participation in national parliaments, 41 countries use at least one form of a quota system. WRAM led on the *Public Perceptions of Women* as Leaders in the Solomon Islands research project between 2018 and 2020. The research found significant support from both men and women for increasing the number of women in parliament, but that women face both structural and social barriers in running for parliament and being elected. WRAM used clear evidence of community support for women's leadership to lobby provincial governments to increase women's representation in political decision making. In addition to generating locally relevant knowledge and evidence, the research process increased WRAM's capacity, confidence and provided further legitimacy to their long-standing advocacy to increase women's leadership.

Throughout the WAVE program, WRAM has relied heavily on evidence-based research to inform their advocacy work at a national level. Their participation as co-researchers in the Women's Leadership Pathway's research built skills within the organisation to build their own evidence base in the future. The results from the research were finalised in 2020 and WRAM has since used the research to launch publicly on Solomon Islands television networks in an effort to support their momentum in advocating for TSM.

WRAM faced several challenges over the five years of the WAVE program, but WRAM's knowledge and expertise on Temporary Special Measures and legislative reform won the support of each of these powerful duty bearers, including provincial assembly leaders and at the end of 2020 the Minister for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and individual champions in National Parliament. WAVE SUPPORT OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT RESULTED IN SIX OF NINE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLIES COMMITTING TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WOMEN LEADERS.

Temporary Special Measures has been on the agenda in Solomon Islands since 2008, when women's rights organisations proposed reserving ten seats for women. WRAM worked with its networks and supporters from women's rights organisations who hold influential relationships with the Premiers of targeted Provincial Governments. In 2018, WRAM successfully lobbied four Provincial Assemblies but faced setbacks due to leadership and membership changes in three Assemblies. In 2019, WRAM secured two out of nine provincial governments endorsements, and they petitioned national parliament to include the Temporary Special Measures clause in the Provincial Government Act. In 2020, a total of six Provincial Governments stated their commitment to reserved seats. In 2020 WRAM also gained the support of the Minister for Women, Freda Tuki Soriocomua. The impact of WRAM's sustained advocacy over the life of the program culminated at the end of 2020, with WRAM's submission to include TSM in the Provincial Government Bill (PGB) scheduled to be introduced to Caucus in the new year by the Minister for Women.

WRAM convened the first National Women's Forum in 2016 and followed with another national forum in 2017 to promote women coming together to discuss issues and set advocacy priorities. WRAM planned for a national forum in 2020, but due to COVID-19 held three provincial forums which increased the number of women from rural communities attending the forums. The forum in Guadalcanal Province focused on the impact of COVID-19 on women market vendors. POPULATION

611,343

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

8% NATIONAL MF

NATIONAL MPS 8% (4 OUT OF 50); 13% OF Provincial leaders (5 of 39); there are no leaders out of 19 for honiara city council

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

41.8% (2008) SIXTH-HIGHEST GLOBALLY

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OPEN (2020)

WAVE PARTNERS

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION MOVEMENT (WRAM)

COUNTRY FOCUS:

PAPUA NEW Guinea

In Papua New Guinea, restrictive cultural norms, violence against women and girls including women's human rights defenders, impacts on women's political participation and leadership and women's rights organisation's ability to engage in advocacy. Civil society faces difficulties coordinating and collaborating due to the geographic span of the country, limited transport and telecommunications infrastructure and cultural diversity.

WAVE partners in Papua New Guinea were: Voice for Change (VFC), who aim to empower and mobilise rural women to take leadership in addressing VAWG and service provision; Wide Bay Conservation Association (WBCA), who work to strengthen the recognition of women as traditional custodians of the land and as equal leaders in their communities; Eastern Highlands Family Voice (EHFV), which joined WAVE in 2019 and works on issues of leadership and VAWG including providing counselling, paralegal and referral services to survivors; and Bouganville Women's Federation (BWF), a WAVE partner until the start of 2020, which is the peak agency for women's rights and development in Bougainville.

BWF had a significant win in 2016 with the passing of the Community Government Act, which stipulates gender parity in representation within Community Government, based on their advocacy. The Act makes it compulsory to have a man and a woman in the President and Vice President roles, with the sex of these roles to alternate at every election.

WAVE partners jointly developed a submission for the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission in 2018 review of electoral laws, including a focus on women's representation in parliament. This submission advocated for the introduction of temporary special measures at both the national and local level. The submission was supported with a one-page brief for community members and a four-page brief for government leaders setting out the key recommendations to support advocacy in their communities

am

EHFV and WBCA supported individual women candidates in the 2019 local level government elections by providing campaign leadership and advocacy skills training. As a result, three women contested in elections in East Pomio District (the first time for women to contest elections in the district) and five contested in the Eastern Highlands. Two women in the Eastern Highlands were nominated as District Assembly representatives, and one woman in East Pomio District was nominated as the women's representative to local level government.

WAVE partners in PNG made significant gains in transforming community attitudes towards women's leadership and VAWG. For example, volunteers in EHFV's target communities report that village courts and peace mediations now include women's voices, and women are able to participate in decision making. Male community leaders in Jiwaka are speaking out to defend VfC's work responding to violence against women and girls.

In Jiwaka Province, VfC advocated for more effective government responses to violence against women, men and children. The result was the establishment of area-based family safety committees, with key service providers working together to provide services to women and children. VfC's advocacy to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary resulted in a police Family Violence and Sexual Unit (FSVU) in Jiwaka. VfC collaborated with communities to develop local good governance, economic empowerment, women's leadership, human rights defenders,

WAVE 5 YEAR REPORT 2016-2020

WAVE PARTNERS FOCUSED ON POLICY LAW REFORM, COMMUNITY ATTITUDE CHANGE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO RESPOND TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

peacebuilding and community engagement. VfC worked closely with government representatives, including Police, courts and health services to ensure that victims of violence access social, legal and economic support.

WBCA trialled a Critical Land Mediation process in three communities in East Pomio, East New Britain, resulting in reduced number of land disputes and strengthening women's decision making over land use. WBCA also facilitated participatory Ward Development Planning in six Wards, ensuring that women's voices are represented in local government planning.

WAVE partners collaborated to develop effective young women's empowerment programs in Bougainville, Jiwaka and East Pomio. WAVE facilitated learning exchanges and the sharing of skills and resources to develop programs targeted to each context.

VfC hosted the first Jiwaka Young Women's Leadership Forum, with almost 200 participants, to encourage young women to become active in and lead women's rights issues in their communities. VfC developed and delivered a program to train and mentor young women aged 15-25 as the next generation of activists committed to women's rights and ending violence against women and girls. VfC also trained ward counsellors on the Local Level Government Act and advocated for young women to be on the Ward Development Committee. After completing VfC's Young Women's Leadership Program, seven of the 44 alumnae went on to become the first young women to be appointed to their seven local Ward Development Committees in early 2020.

In response to COVID-19, WBCA, VfC and EHFV provided community education about COVID safe behaviours to thousands of people in rural communities, and documented stories of the gendered impacts of the State of Emergency. EHFV and VfC pivoted activities to ensure that essential VAWG services continued. WAVE partners prepared a <u>submission to the UN Special</u> <u>Rapporteur on Violence Against Women in Papua</u> <u>New Guine</u>a detailing how the pandemic has led to an increase in violence against women in their communities and reduced women's ability to seek help.

POPULATION

8,776,109

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

0% (0/111) in Natio

(0/111) IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENT (2017). 10% (4/39) AT SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF BOUGAINVILLE (2020).⁷

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

47.6 (2018) HIGHEST GLOBALLY

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OBSTRUCTED (2020)

WAVE PARTNERS

BOUGAINVILLE WOMEN'S FEDERATION (BWF), VOICE FOR CHANGE (VFC), WIDE BAY CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION (WBCA) AND EASTERN HIGHLANDS FAMILY VOICE (EHFV)

RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION

WAVE partners have demonstrated their resilience and innovation over the five years of the program to respond to dynamic contexts, notably political and environmental challenges in their local settings. And in 2020, they faced the most unprecedented global challenge of our time, COVID-19.

Learning and adapting has been a key part of the WAVE program since its inception. While the context and environment has presented challenges to the program, women's rights organisations have taken these lessons and revised their programming and taken on learnings for future programming.

In 2020, the program undertook a final evaluation, which reviewed the key achievements and lessons learned across the five years of implementation. This final evaluation report, and two thematic briefs on advocacy and movement building, provide further information on lessons learned across WAVE, and are available online at the IWDA website.

Over the course of the program, four of the five countries where the WAVE program operates are either repressed or obstructed civic spaces, which means there have been ongoing challenges and limitations imposed on partners in their organising, mobilising and community engagement work over the five years.

In Cambodia, the country has experienced deep civil political repression for most of the duration of WAVE's implementation. Government scrutiny of civil society actors meant that partners at times faced challenges in being able to run events without prior government approval and difficulties in mobilising participants in community events or implementing campaigning activities. WAVE partners overcame these challenges by building relationships with stakeholders at various levels to ensure that women's rights programming could continue and worked in a network with other women's rights organisations and civil society actors to collectively advocate.

In Myanmar, the country was in a transitional state to democracy, after the first democratic elections were held in 2015. Over the 2016-2020 period, the security situation in parts of the country was a concern for partners and deteriorated in 2019, with open conflict in Northern Shan State where partner TWO is located. Freedom of expression continued to be obstructed in Myanmar, with restrictions on some partners being able to carry out public events and campaigns without government scrutiny. To overcome these challenges, Myanmar partners worked on collective campaigning and community organisation, to strengthen the women's movement in Myanmar.

In Timor-Leste, the parliamentary deadlock since 2019 had a significant impact on civil society organisations including women's rights organisations' ability to carry out their work. Halted budgets and guarantined funds for civil society impaired a lot of high-level advocacy. Parliament reached an agreement in 2020 and the budget was passed, which meant much needed funds could flow to partners and WROs could resume their advocacy for policy and legislative change. Partners have largely been able to enjoy freely organising events and activities, but at times met resistance from conservative forces when trying to advance a progressive feminist agenda. Working in coalition with other organisations, progressing advocacy messaging in increments and engaging political leaders in their events have been some of the approaches that partners have used to overcome challenges.

In Papua New Guinea, partners work in conditions of poor infrastructure, lack secure or reliable communications, lack transport, as well as face very high rates of tribal and gender-based violence. There has been civil unrest in the Highlands during election periods as well as surrounding issues of land rights, mining and tribal conflict in recent decades, where partners Voice for Change and Eastern Highlands Family Voice are located. Staff at partner organisations, particularly women, must work in ways to protect their safety and security and those they work with. Investing in security measures, developing deep relationships with community leaders, contingency planning and coordinating closely with police and other local organisations are some of the approaches that partners take. Further, partners are located in rural areas, and there is not a strong centrally organised women's movement in PNG which makes it challenging to organise collective action.

In Solomon Islands, WAVE partner WRAM has taken forward a progressive agenda around Temporary Special Measures. However, there is a long way to go in terms of seeing changes in the number of women in roles of political leadership, with only three woman in a parliament of 50 currently in place in the National Parliament. The National Women's Forum (NWF) is WRAM's flagship movement building activity and a progressive agenda was planned for the 2020 forum. WRAM aimed to bring together the membership of co-convening women's rights organisations to reflect and collaborate on priorities for action. However, COVID-19 and associated travel restrictions forced WRAM to review and adapt its original plan. WRAM's adapted plans for the NWF became one of its great success stories as WRAM organised three smaller forums and took the forums to women in the provinces. This saw increased participation as it was attended by 90 women (a greater number than was anticipated). One of the forums was specifically aimed at young women and was featured in the national media. Adapting to COVID-19 created new opportunities and learnings for WRAM as it pursued this important platform to bring women together to voice their concerns and share the economic and social burdens, now exacerbated by an ensuing pandemic.

Across the program, partners have faced challenges in implementing activities which aim to engage men as advocates for gender equality. While there has been sustained commitment from core groups of men and men working as advocates to advance women's empowerment, partners and women leaders are still vulnerable to experiencing backlash from some members of the community. Ensuring women's safety and protection is a priority for partners. To address this challenge, partners have increased awareness raising on gender equality through wider community forums, given attention to specific training and development programs focused on men's understanding of positive masculinity.

Another challenge faced across the program is the issue of succession planning for outgoing and retiring leaders. Identifying and recruiting suitable leadership is a challenge, particularly in contexts where heading up an NGO can invite backlash and security concerns. The WAVE program has sought to prioritise support for succession planning and leadership transition planning, through accompaniment and strategy support to develop succession plans with Boards; supporting young women's leadership progression strategies; offering intergenerational mentoring to build alliances between younger and older women's rights activists; and offering counselling to current Executive Directors and leaders who are at risk of burnout, stress and isolation.

COVID-19 and the WAVE program

COVID-19 and the measures taken in response to the pandemic have caused significant damage to local communities across Asia and the Pacific, with existing social inequalities, particularly violence against women, being greatly exacerbated. In response, WAVE partners have used their advocacy skills and networks to pivot their collective voice and message to raise duty-bearer awareness on the gendered impacts of the pandemic.

WAVE PARTNERS HAVE USED THEIR ADVOCACY SKILLS AND NETWORKS TO PIVOT THEIR COLLECTIVE VOICE TO RAISE DUTY-BEARER AWARENESS ZON THE GENDERED IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC.

WAVE partners demonstrated composure, generosity, ingenuity, and resilience in the unprecedented situation of the global coronavirus pandemic. WAVE partners quickly pivoted and used their sharp advocacy skills and networks in communities to respond to the crisis. Partners with close ties to communities affected by lockdowns mobilised their members to monitor the situation and respond with financial support, personal protective equipment, and cleaning supplies. Within days, partners issued guidance and support to government offices and humanitarian responders.

In Myanmar, WAVE partners strategically engaged with local authorities to provide critical public health information and supplies needed for rural and ethnic minority women to better protect their health and sustain their livelihoods. In line with global trends, violence against women worsened during the pandemic in many WAVE countries.

In Timor-Leste, despite many challenges and reduced staff capacity, ALFeLa responded to higher caseloads by continuing to provide access to justice for women and children survivors of violence. In PNG, EHFV and VfC also adapted to travel restrictions to provide remote support for women and children survivors of violence, and led community awareness campaigns on COVID-19 and the increased risk of Gender Based Violence. In Solomon Islands, as was the case in many countries, attention and resources turned from the longer-term work of gender equality towards immediate health responses to deal with the pandemic.

For WAVE partner WRAM in Solomon Islands, restrictions prevented the annual National Women's Forum and so three separate, smaller forums were organised to ensure that women's voice remained amplified in spite of social distancing measures.

Some WAVE partners were able to work with their community members to advocate on their own behalf for an improved government response. In Cambodia, United Sisterhood supported their network to conduct their own COVID-19 research on farmers, factory workers, and sex workers, presenting it to duty bearers as evidence of their rights as citizens, and to directly lobby duty bearers about their livelihoods.

SUSTAINING CHANGE

TANG ELINA (CAMBODIA)

WAVE RECOGNISED THE KEY **ROLE THAT YOUNG WOMEN PLAY** IN DEMOCRACY AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.



PARTICIPANT IN GENDER BASED VIOLENCE Workshop run by Alola, timor leste.

30 LOISY AUARIRI WATE, WARA, SOLOMON ISLANDS

RITA SARMENTO MARTINS, FRANCISCA Alves Taolin (Timor-Leste)









WAVE'S FLEXIBLE FUNDING SUPPORTED SPACES FOR PARTNERS TO CONVENE AND COLLABORATE.



ILY BE'SOER, VOICE FOR CHANGE, PNG



PARTNERS ENGAGED IN FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH TO BUILD EVIDENCE OF HOW CHANGE FOR GENDER EQUALITY HAPPENS.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION I



HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEIR RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES AND THE PANDEMIC.



CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS FOR YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS, DETERMINATION, RESILIENCE AND COLLABORATION OVER THE FIVE YEARS OF THE WAVE PROGRAM.

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www.iwda.org.au/wave