

WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE
AND EMPOWERMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

WAVE



WAVE
WOMEN'S ACTION FOR
VOICE & EMPOWERMENT



COLLECTIVE ACTION TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE, SUSTAINABLE CHANGE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

MON PHOU, GENDER PEACE NETWORK ACTIVIST WITH BANTEAY
SREI, CAMBODIA. PHOTO: HARIANO DIOVORUSONO

International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), in partnership with 18 women's rights organisations, collaborates to deliver the Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) program in five countries. With powerful support from the Government of the Netherlands, WAVE increases the voice, agency, representation and diversity of women in leadership and movements, striving for gender equality.

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

IWDA is committed to ongoing, long-term partnerships with women's organisations in Asia and the Pacific, and builds on partners' skills and interests to provide capacity strengthening tools, resources and support to build WAVE partners' effectiveness and resilience.

IWDA's role in WAVE is as an ally, strategist, convenor, funder and partner at regional and international levels. IWDA, with our 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.

The 2019 annual report demonstrates the collective action, voice and power of diverse women leaders, women's rights organisations and movements in achieving change.

IWDA acknowledges the transformative impact of significant, long-term and flexible funding from the Government of the Netherlands in making the achievements laid out in this report possible.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

WAVE PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

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

Through WAVE, IWDA works in partnership with 18 women's rights organisations in Cambodia, Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and 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 (Akhaya)
- Ta'ang Women's Organisation (TWO)
- Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN)
- Women's League of Burma (WLB)
- Women's Initiative Platform (WIP)

CAMBODIA

- Banteay Srei (BS)
- Amara
- Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)
- United Sisterhood Alliance (Us)

TIMOR-LESTE

- Alola Foundation (Alola)
- Asisténsia Legal Ba Feto no Labarik - Legal Aid for Women and Children (ALFeLa)
- Rede Feto - Women's Rights Network
- Caucus (for MP program in 2019)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

- Bougainville Women's Federation (BWF)
- Voice for Change (VfC)
- Wide Bay Conversation Association (WBCA)
- Eastern Highlands Family Voice (EHFV)

SOLOMON ISLANDS

- Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)

AUSTRALIA

- International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)

WAVE THEORY OF CHANGE

WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE AND
EMPOWERMENT 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

INDIVIDUALS

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

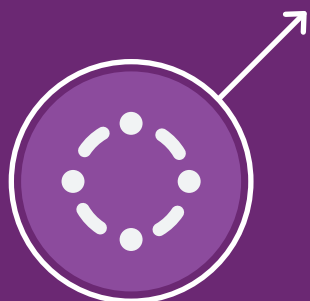


POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Power-holders and institutions are responsive to and accountable for women's rights and status

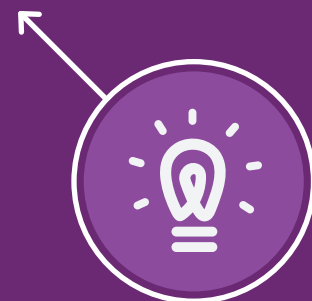


WOMEN LEAD
TRANSFORMATIVE,
SUSTAINABLE CHANGE
TOWARDS GENDER
EQUALITY, ENABLED BY
STRATEGIC FEMINIST
ENGAGEMENT



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

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

HERE IS A SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF THE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS OF WAVE IN 2019, DRAWING ON THE PROGRAM'S WORK ACROSS INDIVIDUAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, MOVEMENTS, SYSTEMIC CHANGE AND RESEARCH AND LEARNING.

228

WOMEN ASSUMED LEADERSHIP ROLES

3,080

COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED THROUGH MALE ADVOCATES

26

INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

7,663

WOMEN ACCESSED RESOURCES FOR LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

58

CASES OF SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY FOR POLICY CHANGE

6,157

PEOPLE ENGAGED THROUGH WOMEN'S RIGHTS CAMPAIGNS

2,256

WOMEN SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE SUPPORTED

9

PIECES OF FEMINIST RESEARCH

28.6%

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SEATS HELD BY WOMEN IN NATIONAL, SUBNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SINCE WAVE COMMENCED



STAFF FROM TANG WOMEN'S ORGANISATION (TWO), MYANMAR.
PHOTO: HARLOND DIOBORISONO

PILLAR 1

WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE AND
EMPOWERMENT 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

INDIVIDUAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP



With the support of WAVE, more individual women, in all their diversities, are taking on leadership roles in civil and political spheres. Ensuring women have a strong voice, agency and the ability to genuinely participate and lead decision making has continued to be a key focus of the WAVE program in 2019, powered by FLOW funding.

Increasing women's leadership requires action in multiple areas, in ways that address both formal and informal barriers. WAVE has provided capacity building for individual women including young women; targeted the enabling environment – communities and women's spouses – to support women to be perceived as equally legitimate and effective leaders as men; and advocated for gender quota models to be introduced in electoral frameworks and party policies.

WAVE recognises that women's leadership cannot be achieved without addressing violence against women. That's why the program takes a strong intersectional approach on both prevention and response to violence against women and girls, as well as supporting male advocates for gender equality programming.

AMPLIFYING AND ADVANCING WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CHANGES GENDER NORMS.

JEAN JANO FROM EASTERN HIGHLANDS FAMILY VOICE,
PAPUA NEW GUINEA. PHOTO: SIMON TOFFANELLO



PILLAR 1: INDIVIDUAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

In WAVE's fourth year, the program continued to see an increase in the number of women becoming leaders, with 228 women taking on leadership positions in the community.

Focusing on women's long-term journeys to leadership – in both formal and civil spheres – is an important component of WAVE. Confirmed by the *Women's Leadership Pathways* research (see page 20), which shows women's leadership pathways can take many years, WAVE is investing significantly in long-term coaching, training and peer-to-peer learning for current and potential women leaders. In 2019, all WAVE partners collectively reached 8,599 women with capacity skills development activities.

Exchange and mentoring programs for women parliamentarians in Myanmar and Timor-Leste took engaged women from across borders to advance gender equality in their respective parliaments (see page 9). In Myanmar, WIP continued their ten-month residential leadership course with ground-breaking individualised campaign coaching for 22 women candidates in preparation for 2020 elections. In Cambodia, GADC continued their *Gender Café* model engaging current, aspiring and civil activist leaders to support each other in feminist leadership approaches.

In PNG, EHFV and WBCA supported women candidates in the 2019 Local Level Government elections by providing campaign leadership training, voter education, and raising awareness on women's rights to stand for election. Following training from our partners, three women contested in elections in East Pomio District (the first time a woman has ever contested) and five contested in Eastern Highlands. Two women in 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 as a result of their campaigns. This is a significant achievement, given the entrenched cultural norms preventing women from standing for elections.

Recognising the key role that young women play in the future of democracy, partners also focused on supporting young women to develop their skills and capabilities to lead in political, social and economic spheres. Partners implemented young women's leadership training programs in PNG, Cambodia and Myanmar (VfC, WBCA, Banteay Srei, TWO, SWAN); internship programs within government in Cambodia (GADC) and political parties in Myanmar (TWO, SWAN); and youth citizen groups (GADC).

Women are increasingly taking leading roles to establish community forums and collective action with marginalised communities, with more than 6,500 community members attending forums on women's leadership across the program. In PNG, VfC hosted the first Jiwaka Young Women's Leadership Forum, engaging almost 200 participants. Alola in Timor-Leste worked with MP project partner Caucus to engage community members in citizen forums with parliamentarians. In Cambodia, Us convened 180 sex workers and duty bearers at the first national Sex Workers Forum on protecting workers' rights to safety, income and social security.

WAVE's 2019 *Women's Non-Formal Leadership in Asia Pacific* report reviewed best practice on non-formal leadership across the region. It found that workshops and forums are particularly valuable in establishing a network for participants to access mentors, resources and networks which directly leads to tangible, sustainable and individual change for participants.

In late 2019, six partners from five countries worked together to co-design and facilitate a Male Engagement Workshop to share best practice and lessons on engaging men as advocates for women's leadership and prevention of violence against women and girls. Partners completed a learning paper on *Engaging Men in Preventing Violence Against Women*, which included 12 recommendations for engaging men in gender equality programming. Alongside this, partners in PNG (VfC), Cambodia (GADC, Banteay Srei), Timor-Leste (Alola) and Myanmar (TWO) implemented male engagement projects, training 128 men as male advocates, who worked with 3,080 people in the community to advance gender equality.

Protecting women and children from violence and addressing violence as a barrier to women's leadership has been an intersecting theme of the WAVE program since its inception. In 2019, 2,256 women and children survivors of violence accessed support through referrals, counselling and safe houses, from partners in Cambodia (Banteay Srei), Myanmar (TWO and SWAN), PNG (VfC) and Timor-Leste (ALFeLa, Alola). Campaigning against violence and lobbying on policy reform related to sexual and gender based violence has also been a particular focus for many partners in 2019 (see Pillar 2).

IN FOCUS: SUSTAINED SUPPORT FOR WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

In 2019, WAVE supported two political mentoring and exchange models with women parliamentarians in Myanmar and Timor-Leste, to support women leaders to progress a transformative agenda.

Supporting women political leaders to advance gender equality and increase their capacity to lead and influence has been a core objective of the WAVE program. WAVE's Women's Political Leadership Strategy highlights the importance of working holistically, across the electoral cycle, in ways that address both formal and informal barriers to women's political leadership. One approach is sustained mentoring and peer exchange models, which provide continued capacity development support and peer learning to build on women's strong leadership skills and increase their chances of re-election and influence in office.

With support from the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and in partnership with local Timorese women's rights organisation, Caucus, WAVE contributed to an MP exchange program in 2019 under the banner Women Supporting Women. Six women MPs from Timor-Leste visited Australia in February, and were linked to six counterpart women federal parliamentarians in Australia. The program aimed to strengthen Timorese women MPs' capacity and influence, including as women's rights advocates. The program also established new personal and professional relationships between Timorese and Australian policy and law makers. One Timorese MP commented that the struggles of her Australian counterpart in getting re-elected served as an inspiration and reference to her. MPs from both countries expressed their pride in each other for continuing to stand and be elected.

Following the visit, which included a program at the Federal Parliament in Canberra and connections with women's rights organisations in Australia, the MPs continued to stay in touch remotely. In Timor-Leste, the MPs were supported by Caucus to engage in local community and civic engagement activities and worked with other WAVE partners, such as Alola, linking to their women's leadership programs.

In October 2019, a delegation of six women MPs from Myanmar visited Australia as part of the ongoing Myanmar MP Mentoring Program that has been rolled out through WAVE since 2017, co-implemented with Akhaya in Myanmar. This was the second time that women MPs from Myanmar visited Australia as part of a broader mentoring program strongly supported by capacity building activities for MPs within Myanmar and remote communication between matched MPs. After the week-long visit to Australia, Myanmar MP Daw Lwi Sar from the National League for Democracy noted that the exchange had "transformed her mind".

The Myanmar MPs are from different political parties and diverse ethnic groups, promoting important cross-party engagement. The model demonstrates the value of sustained, tailored support to targeted women leaders throughout the electoral cycle. Through linking with mentors, and ongoing capacity development in country, the objective is to increase women's chances of re-election at the 2020 Myanmar Elections.

This program will undergo an independent evaluation in 2020, which will inform future mentoring activities.

MYANMAR'S LWI SAR MP WITH AUSTRALIA'S SENATOR JANET RICE.
PHOTO: MARIA SANELEVA



PILLAR 2

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE AND
EMPOWERMENT 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



The engagement of power holders and institutions to advance gender equality and protect diverse women's rights and status is a crucial pathway in the WAVE Theory of Change. Supporting coordinated advocacy across the program as well as individual partner advocacy priorities has progressed significantly in 2019.

As women's rights organisations face closing civil spaces and increased backlash against women's human rights and feminist agendas, a strategic and transformative advocacy response is more critical than ever. Ensuring that women's voices and women's rights organisations are heard loud and clear is a key priority of the WAVE program.

In line with WAVE's Theory of Change, which proposes that coordinated and targeted advocacy will lead to policy and legislative reform and shifts in harmful gender norms, the WAVE program invested significantly in coordinated advocacy initiatives in 2019. This included tailored advocacy technical support to individual partners, as well as scaling up regional and global lobbying initiatives.

This sustained advocacy work is made possible by the flexible and long-term funding from the Government of the Netherlands.

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCACY
MUST HAVE AT ITS HEART THE
EXPRESSED PRIORITIES OF WOMEN
THEMSELVES, PARTICULARLY
THOSE FACING INTERSECTING
DISCRIMINATIONS.**

PARTICIPANTS ATTEND A GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE WORKSHOP RUN
BY ALOLA FOUNDATION, TIMOR-LESTE. HARJONO DIDYOBISINDO



PILLAR 2: SYSTEMIC CHANGE

In 2019, WAVE increased technical and communications support to partners to prepare them to advocate in regional and global spaces. With this support, partners wrote submissions and shadow reports to engage duty bearers to inform national and regional-level review processes in the lead up to international forums (see In Focus).

WAVE partners' work was highlighted in three Beijing +25 State reports, which fed into the B+25 Asia-Pacific regional review to inform the global Platform agenda in 2020 and beyond. Cambodian partners' Public Perceptions research was cited in Cambodia's national B+25 review, and indicated public support for women as political leaders. The Solomon Islands Government referenced WRAM's advocacy work around temporary special measures (TSMs). In Timor-Leste, the Government praised Rede Feto, Alola and ALFela for their work combating gender-based violence, promoting women's economic empowerment, access to justice and gender-responsive data collection.

WAVE partners also enjoyed significant progress at the local level, seeing reforms which advanced women's rights and status. In Solomon Islands, WRAM overcame setbacks to lead lobbying campaigns for the country's Provincial Government Assemblies to endorse the inclusion of TSMs in the Provincial Government Act. Following successful lobbying with four Provincial Government Assemblies in 2018, WRAM's progress was set back due to leadership and membership changes in three Assemblies that had previously endorsed TSMs after elections. Nevertheless, WRAM persisted, and in 2019 secured two out of nine provincial governments endorsement for TSMs. These provincial governments petitioned national parliament to include the TSMs clause in the Provincial Government Act. In 2020, a further three Provincial Government Assemblies endorsed TSMs, setting the stage for the national parliament to enshrine TSMs at the local level into law this year.

In Cambodia, Banteay Srei supported women leaders in the provinces of Siem Reap and Battambang to influence a 160% average annual budget increase to gender and social services across 40 Commune Councils. This was achieved through Banteay Srei's long-term training for women leaders on commune governance processes, facilitating community input to gender responsive Village Development Plans, and supporting women leaders to advocate on these priorities in Commune Investment Plans.

All five Myanmar partners strategically engaged with political parties to influence their policies and procedures. Following targeted advocacy by partners and the broader women's movement, partners celebrated commitments to TSMs made by two political parties. The Chin National League for Democracy announced a minimum of 30% women across party committees and candidate preselection. The Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), one of the largest ethnic political parties, committed to a minimum of 30% women in all leadership positions. An MP from the SNLD in the MP mentoring project (see page 9), strongly advocated for this change, drawing on learnings from the Australian Labor Party regarding the effectiveness of gender quotas. Akhaya also gained support from the two participating MPs on the Women and Child Rights Committee to facilitate 16 women survivors of violence to share their experiences directly with committee members. This level of direct community engagement by a parliamentary committee is ground-breaking in Myanmar.

Also in Myanmar, WAVE continued to provide critical support to Myanmar's CEDAW Alliance, the first mechanism established in Myanmar for joint CEDAW advocacy. Formed in 2016, the Alliance is made up of four national women's rights networks, including WAVE partner WLB. The Alliance targeted advocacy efforts at state and regional level parliamentarians, taking advantage of the broad reach of Alliance members across Myanmar. Akhaya leveraged its relationship with the MPs to advocate for the adoption of a comprehensive Prevention of Violence against Women (PoVAW) Bill.

Throughout 2019, all WAVE partners continued to take part in WAVE's Our Voice joint advocacy campaign. Together, celebrating the one-year anniversary of Our Voice on International Women's Day, partners developed joint messages demanding action to increase women's effective participation in local decision-making. Raising their voices, these messages were amplified when partners attended the Pacific Feminist Forum, collaborated on International Rural Women's Day, stood in solidarity with each other on International Day of Peace and mobilised communities for action during the 16 Days of Activism. WAVE supported 50 joint advocacy initiatives with the creation of 16,000 local language campaign materials and briefs.

IN FOCUS: WAVE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

WAVE partners are increasingly joining forces to leverage their experience, relationships and areas of interest for joint advocacy and learning using international frameworks. Together, WAVE partners developed the International Engagement Action Plan, which first took shape in Year 2 of the program.

In 2019, this action plan saw more activity than ever with WAVE supporting partners to undertake advocacy actions in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) reporting processes, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Universal Periodic Review Process, the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and United Nations Security Council resolutions on women peace and security.

Partner engagement in international fora and mechanisms demonstrates WAVE's support for systemic change advocacy in three ways.

First, WAVE provides the opportunities, funding and accompaniment support for diverse women to attend key international events for gender equality and amplify the priorities of their local women's movements. In 2019, WAVE sponsored six women to attend the UNESCAP Asia Pacific Regional Review of the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (B+25 Review). Comprised of three women from WAVE partner organisations and three from the broader Pacific women's rights movement,

the delegation increased the visibility of issues for their organisations and constituencies by influencing the Young Feminists Call to Action for the B+25 Review, speaking on CSO Forum panels, contributing to interventions during the Intergovernmental Meeting and engaging directly with their government representatives. WAVE's accompaniment strategy created a supportive network and space for participants to actively connect with regional movements and strengthen their networks.

Secondly, WAVE provides technical support for partners to advocate at the international level. In 2019, GADC, United Sisterhood and Banteay Srei contributed submissions to four NGO shadow reports. WAVE supported representatives from all three partners to jointly represent Cambodian NGOs at the 74th Session of CEDAW in Geneva. Prior to the session WAVE funded participants to attend training with International Women's Rights Action Watch and other Cambodian delegates where they collectively determined key demands for the Committee. Together with the Cambodian NGO committee on CEDAW, partners shared an important advocacy message from women across Asia and the Pacific: discrimination against women can only be solved through strong women's leadership. They called on the Committee to hold the Government of Cambodia accountable to its commitments, particularly the use of TSMs, and advocated on issues related to women's leadership, cultural norms, labour, sex work and gender-responsive budgeting.

Finally, WAVE provides the space, resources and technical expertise to support the development of national movements for international framework accountability. In PNG, WAVE supported partners to strengthen their capacity to actively engage in CEDAW processes and monitoring tools. With renewed confidence in using CEDAW as an advocacy tool, PNG partners collaborated with key stakeholders to strengthen PNG's engagement with CEDAW and to ensure that rural women's voices and experiences are heard. Together, this coalition released a joint statement in local newspapers calling for the government to report to the United Nations Committee.

VOICE FOR CHANGE'S LILY BOSCHER AT THE B+25 REVIEW IN BANGKOK. PHOTO: UN ASIA PACIFIC



PILLAR 3

WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE AND
EMPOWERMENT 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS



Women have the right to influence decisions that affect their lives, yet individual women and women's organisations are chronically and systematically under-resourced and excluded from decision-making in Asia and the Pacific region. WAVE supports women's organisations who in turn strengthen the women's movement. A key element of a strong feminist movement is a deep connection to marginalised and socially excluded constituencies. Movements are often the most effective way for particularly marginalised groups of women to become visible and have their voices heard.

In 2019 WAVE has continued to support partners across the region to host forums for diverse women to build their consciousness, share experiences, undertake joint analysis of issues and coordinate collective responses. Since the beginning of WAVE, these women's forums have built a strong constituency base, strengthened their collective feminist analysis and are now building momentum on coordinated action for change.

**OUR VOICE IS LOUDER AND OUR
POWER AMPLIFIED WHEN WE
WORK TOGETHER.**

PARTICIPANTS AT THE 2019 WAVE ALL-PARTNER WORKSHOP
IN CAMBODIA. PHOTO: SIMON TOFFANELLO



PILLAR 3: WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

WAVE convenes and enhances spaces where women leaders can connect, share, learn and organise together to strengthen and deepen the already strong and vibrant women's movement in Asia and the Pacific region.

In Timor-Leste, WAVE partner Rede Feto convened the 5th National Women's Congress in 2019, with 34 organisations from across the country. The Platform of Action (PoA) resulting from the Congress sets the agenda for ongoing collective action by the network. In stark contrast to the last PoA in 2014, which highlighted the need to "strengthen family values to prevent disharmony, divorce, abandonment and single mothers", this year's PoA reflects a much more progressive movement which focuses on the structural barriers to women realising their rights and advocates for the rights of young women, LGBTIQ people, people with disabilities and women war veterans and survivors.

In PNG, VFC, WBCA and BWF all undertook movement building forums. VFC hosted the first ever Jiwaka Young Women's Leadership Forum with almost 200 participants. The forum was a result of VFC's Young Women's Leadership Program which has supported 16 young women through a two-year training program. The forum provided a platform for information sharing about services available to support women and girls in the province and to inspire a wider cohort of young women to consider leadership roles. WBCA brought 19 rural women leaders from across rural East Pomio District to the capital to discuss issues faced in their communities, and develop advocacy messages for duty bearers. The women directly engaged with leaders of the Local Level and Provincial governments for the first time. The women built confidence in their advocacy skills, and in taking action and speaking directly to decision makers. Of the initiative, WBCA Director Elizabeth Tongne said "when people are provided space to learn and share information they become confident in moving into spaces that they were not confident to step in earlier." BWF conducted three regional women's forums to gather the experiences and perspectives of women leaders across the Autonomous Region of Bougainville. BWF supported 67 participants to develop Outcome Statements highlighting the key issues faced by women in each region, and advocacy messages for government and duty bearers.

In addition to these national level forums, WAVE continues to support the strengthening of relationships and connections amongst WAVE partners at the regional level. In response to the WAVE 2018 Mid-Term Reflection, the program convened national level workshops in each country to bring partners together to share strategies and collaborate on WAVE implementation. Based on connections made at WAVE all-partner workshops, a thematic learning forum was also initiated. The learning forum created a space where representatives from seven geographically diverse WAVE organisations with experience and expertise on engaging men in the prevention of violence against women, could share and learn from each other. Key findings and recommendations from the forum were developed into a Learning Paper.

In 2019, WAVE also convened an all-partner workshop facilitated by feminist leadership and movement building expert, Srilatha Batliwala (see page 17)

Strong movements are supported by strong women's organisations and in 2019, WAVE has continued to support individual organisations in strengthening their ability to commit and engage in line with the five capabilities framework. As a result, 70% of all partner organisations reported high or very high ability to 'commit and engage'.

WAVE supports partners in a variety of tailored organisational development activities. For example, in 2019 WAVE supported WLB in the drafting of an application for the Netherlands Embassy in Myanmar Human Rights Tulip Award. The application was successful with WLB being awarded the Tulip for 2019 in recognition of their 20 years of advocacy for the rights of all women in Myanmar.

Another key organisational strengthening input from the program in 2019 was the development of five-year plans with all WAVE partners. Through the five-year planning process partners were supported to use various gender analysis frameworks to analyse their contexts and their programs and consider their strategic priorities for the coming five years. This supports partners' programming and organisational sustainability and resource mobilisation priorities post 2020.

IN FOCUS: WAVE PARTNERS STRENGTHEN TIES

The WAVE Mid-Term Reflection revealed that partners believed collective power is fundamental to structural transformation and desired more training to strengthen their movements for change. The Mid-Term Reflection recommended WAVE work with partners to develop a shared understanding of a feminist analysis and approaches to structural inequality. This formed the cornerstone of the WAVE All-Partner Workshop held in 2019.

In 2019, WAVE brought together 45 individuals, representing all 18 WAVE partners, to learn about power, patriarchy, feminist leadership and strengthening movements for change, to enhance the program's effectiveness and transformational approach.

Led and facilitated by renowned feminist scholar and activist Srilatha Batliwala, the 2019 WAVE All-Partner Workshop demonstrates WAVE's support for vital, visible and vocal women's movements in three ways.

First, the workshop deepened partner knowledge around the various forms and locations of gendered power, the key steps of sustainable movement building and the foundations of feminist leadership. As noted in the *WAVE Movement Strengthening Strategy* finalised in 2019, the single most important tool for successful movements is a critical feminist framework through which to view a given issue. Srilatha's four decades of experience in grassroots activism, movement-building, research and writing on the global stage, served as a real world example of the benefit of feminist analysis and approaches for partners. Her lessons, practical tools and ability to provide strategic feedback to participant experiences and approaches strengthened the group's analytical skills and partners' ability to commit and engage in feminist movements.

Secondly, the 2019 workshop provided an opportunity for all WAVE partners to establish a shared political agenda for future programming. The Mid-Term Review highlighted that when women's organisations, groups, networks and coalitions collaborate on common goals and shared objectives, their voices are louder and power is amplified. As such, following foundational sessions which set the common basis of understanding for WAVE partners, Srilatha supported partners in using this analysis to strategically plan ways to strengthen their local women's movements and revise the WAVE Theory of Change to create cohesive ways of taking action for structural change.

Thirdly, the WAVE All-Partner Workshop strengthened the WAVE movement identity by creating solidarity between WAVE partners. Connected organisations and activists can learn from each other, have more reach and are the foundation of a successful movement. Srilatha's collaborative exercises provided many opportunities for group sharing, feedback and ideas exchange which highlighted the common challenges of working for gender equality in the Asia Pacific region. Discussions on these common challenges allowed partners to deepen their relationships and expand their networks for joint advocacy and movement work.

The WAVE All-Partner workshop has built the capacity of women's organisations to commit and engage in local movements and expand movement building work across the WAVE program. Following this workshop, IWDA has seen renewed interest in using feminist power analysis and organising methods in WAVE joint advocacy work. As Srilatha noted: "Feminism is getting reinvented, it's getting revitalised and people are creating new spaces and new axes of organising."

SOPHIE KILPI, PRAK CHANDRASEKAR, SRILATHA BATLIWALA, ELIZABETH TONGUE AND
KHIN PHOTUNT AT THE WAVE ALL-PARTNER WORKSHOP. PHOTO: SIMON TOFFANELLO



PILLAR 4

RESEARCH, EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

WOMEN'S ACTION FOR VOICE AND
EMPOWERMENT 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



WAVE is generating evidence of how change happens towards gender equality to inform work for women's leadership and feminist movements.

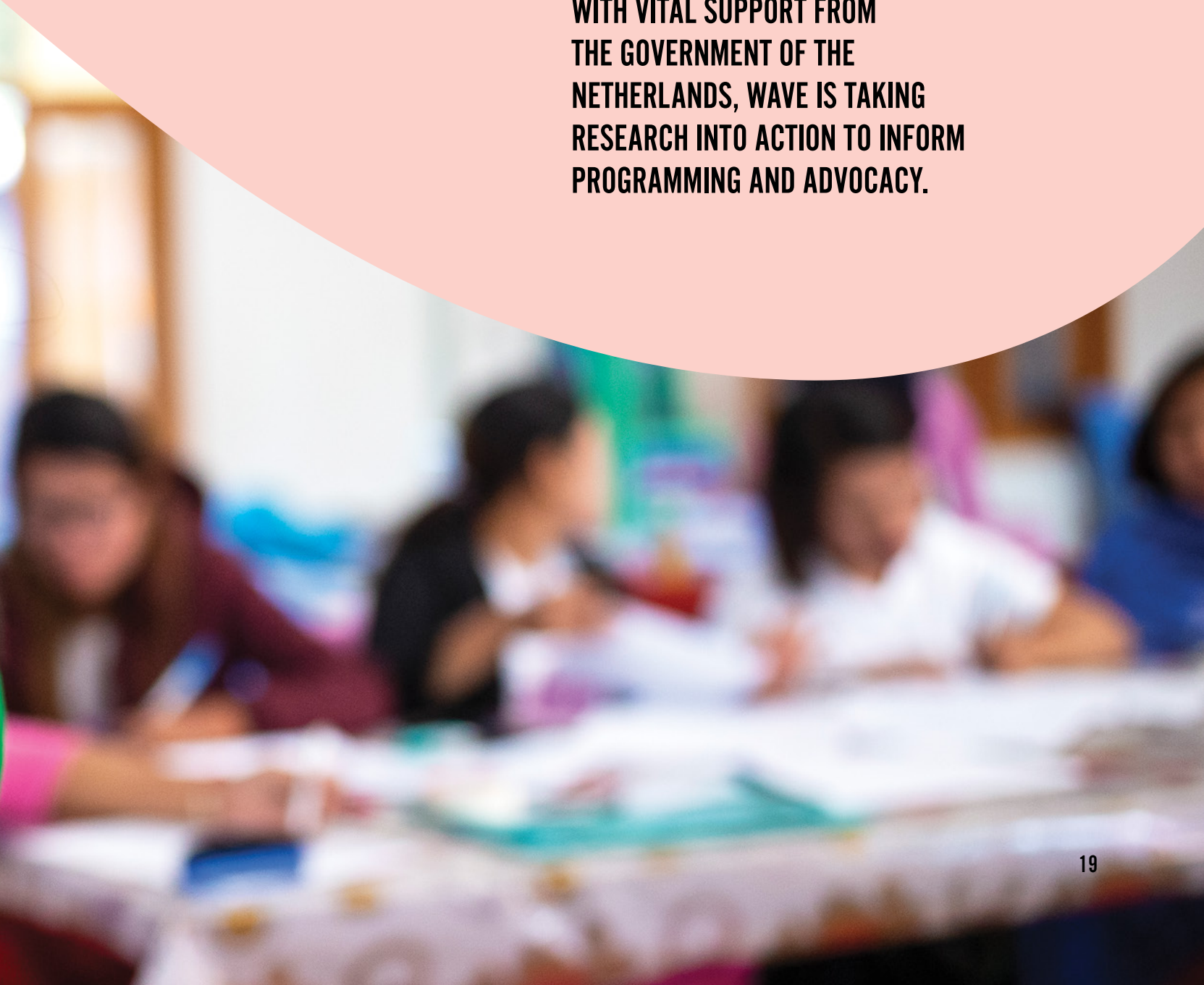
WAVE's research projects take a feminist approach in their content and design, informed by IWDA's Feminist Research Framework. A feminist approach to research aims to capture the diversity of women's experiences, explore the gendered manifestation of power, and interrogate the operation of gender norms.

WAVE's research projects aim to enhance understanding of how change happens towards gender equality, and have focused on the enablers and barriers of women in leadership, as well as the contribution and role of movements in progressing gender equality.

Importantly, putting research findings into the hands of women's rights organisations – WAVE partners and other civil society organisations – supports programming and advocacy, and provides evidence to support lobbying campaigns for policy reform to advance gender equality.

**WITH VITAL SUPPORT FROM
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE
NETHERLANDS, WAVE IS TAKING
RESEARCH INTO ACTION TO INFORM
PROGRAMMING AND ADVOCACY.**

LWAY KU KU LEADS A WORKSHOP HOSTED BY TANG WOMEN'S ORGANISATION, MYANMAR. PHOTO: HARJONO DIOYBISNO



PILLAR 4: RESEARCH, EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

In 2019, the WAVE program continued investment in two research projects on women's leadership: Women's Leadership Pathways and Public Perceptions of Women as Leaders, and commenced the design for the final piece of research in the WAVE program on feminist movement strengthening.

Public Perceptions of Women as Political Leaders

In 2019, WAVE completed the Public Perceptions of Women as Political Leaders studies in three countries: Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Cambodia (see page 19). The purpose of the three studies was to deepen the collective understanding of public perceptions of the qualities and qualifications necessary for leadership and the gender norms associated with these perceptions. Following the completion of data collection, with a total of 1,421 surveys, 141 interviews and 42 focus group discussions completed across the participating countries, 2019 saw a focus on data analysis, the development of research recommendations, finalisation of research reports, and the commencement of research into action and advocacy strategy planning with partners in three countries.

Women's Leadership Pathways

Twelve partners from across all WAVE countries continued participatory research with women leaders and aspiring leaders in economic, social and political spheres, as part of the Women's Leadership Pathways study. This three-year collaborative, feminist research project aims 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 will provide evidence on the success factors and barriers for leadership to support partners' programming and advocacy strategies.

Central to the Women's Leadership Pathways study approach is strengthening the research capacity within WAVE partner organisations, including IWDA. The study involves a long standing partnership with Le Groupe-conseil Baastel Itte, who have provided technical oversight, capacity development support to partners, and ensured rigor in partners' development of research tools. The study's participatory approach has engaged WAVE partner organisation staff as co-researchers, to develop and hone their skills in developing research tools, collecting and analysing data, joint analysis between partners and how to make use of data to inform programming approaches.

Emerging findings from across partners suggest that there are multiple success factors for women to access leadership positions that include: supportive household environments, namely the specific encouragement of their spouse; support from immediate family and community; male duty bearers progressing a gender empowerment agenda; and in the Pacific, the church's support of women's leadership is crucial. The findings also suggest that women (and their communities) do not always consider themselves as the leadership 'equivalents' of men. This finding has an interesting implication for understanding why women chose to pursue leadership.

The project will conclude in 2020 with a data analysis workshop involving all partners (completed in February 2020), and taking research into action, through individual country and joint advocacy opportunities.

Feminist Movement Building

In 2019, the project design for WAVE's third research project on feminist movement building in the Pacific region, was finalised. In the first half of 2020, a Pacific-based researcher will undertake story collection and interviews with key movement actors to understand the Global South women's rights movement perspectives on the role of the Global North, as a case study in the Pacific. The purpose of the research is to gather and document the views of Pacific region women's rights movement actors on Global North engagement with these movements and to identify key elements of effective engagement between Global South women's rights movements and Global North organisations in the future.

Several WAVE partners also undertook their own knowledge gathering exercises in 2019. In Cambodia, United Sisterhood completed research on how the representations of gender and sexual based violence in the media perpetuates harm against women. The "Uncomfortable Truth" report, video and infographics were launched at an event involving government, media and non-government actors, where the Ministry of Women's Affairs acknowledged the need for ethical media reporting. This research informs US's advocacy campaign strategy to demand better duty bearer and media response to protect survivors of violence. In PNG, VfC published stories of change of young women leaders who have completed the Young Women Leaders program.

IN FOCUS: PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN AS POLITICAL LEADERS

In 2019, IWDA and WAVE partners in Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands completed the *Public Perceptions of Women as Political Leaders* study. The research specifically sought to deepen understandings of the public perceptions of the qualities of and qualifications for political leadership and the gender norms associated with these perceptions.

Given the varied contexts across the countries, each *Public Perceptions* study was tailored to respond to the local setting and partner-level research priorities, resulting in three studies with a common theme but unique characteristics.

In Cambodia, the research focussed on perceptions of women as political leaders at sub-national or 'Commune Council' level. In Timor-Leste, partners studied people's views of women as leaders at the local or *suku* level. While in Solomon Islands, the study similarly explored public views on women as political leaders, but also investigated views on gender quotas to increase women's political representation.

The findings and recommendations from each project reflect the unique contexts in which they took place. However, there are important shared themes in the findings.

The overwhelming majority of participants in all three studies expressed support for the idea of gender equality and increased political representation by women. However, political leadership is still strongly associated with men and views on women's capacity for leadership are coloured by stereotypes of women's qualities and attributes. Leadership is still seen by many people as 'men's business.'

The studies found that there are differing expectations for women and men as political leaders, with the expectations of women much higher and harder to meet. The prioritisation of women's domestic and caring roles over public roles is evident in all three studies.

Research participants across the three countries identified a number of structural issues as impediments to women's representation and effective participation at all levels. These included access to resources, educational differences between women and men, political party practices and the influence of incumbent leaders.

Findings across research countries indicate that there is some public awareness of formal and informal barriers to women's political leadership. Many participants recognised that political party practices, limited access to financial resources and the influence of those in power were significant impediments to women considering political leadership. Findings suggest there is also some awareness of less visible barriers, including perceptions of women's capacity for leadership. The research recommends that increasing public understanding of these informal barriers should be a focus in work towards gender equality in political leadership.

There was a strong emphasis in the *Public Perceptions* research on generating findings to assist women's rights organisations and advocates for gender equality in political leadership. IWDA and partner organisations are actively drawing on the findings and recommendations from each country in relation to both immediate elections and long term planning. For example, in Cambodia, partners have drawn on the research evidence for national and international advocacy. This has included a presentation to Cambodia's Ministry for Women's Affairs as input to the government's five-year national Gender Equality strategy and in advocacy for Cambodia's CEDAW Review. The research was also cited in the Royal Government of Cambodia's report to the Beijing +25 Review. In Solomon Islands, WRAM has used messaging in mainstream media such as radio talk shows and community spaces, such as churches.



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

WAVE partners demonstrated their resilience and innovation in 2019 to respond to context, political and environmental challenges in their local settings. The program also adapted to lessons learned, and ensured learnings from across partners and countries were shared widely to enhance program effectiveness.

Four of the five countries where the WAVE program operates are either repressed or obstructed civic spaces (according to data from CIVICUS), which means there continue to be challenges and limitations imposed on partners in their organising, mobilising and community engagement work.

In 2019, Cambodia continued to experience deep civil political repression. Government scrutiny of civil society actors meant that partners at times faced challenges in running events without government approval and difficulties in engaging participants in community events or running mobilising campaigning activities. To overcome these challenges, partners have tried to engage with local level village chiefs, commune councillors and the police to promote the purpose of their work and gain their understanding, so that there is less local-level resistance to public activities going ahead. Partners also shifted their focus in 2019 to women's civil leadership, away from political leadership which attracts greater government scrutiny.

In Myanmar, the security situation in parts of the country deteriorated in 2019, with open conflict in Northern Shan State where partner TWO is located. TWO staff were increasingly threatened by military when attempting to support women survivors of violence perpetrated by military personnel and in some cases, postponed activities where project sites were deemed unsafe. IWDA staff were unable to visit TWO in the later part of 2019 due to travel restrictions. Freedom of expression continues to be obstructed in Myanmar, with restrictions on some partners being able to carry out public events and campaigns without government scrutiny. In the case of the CEDAW Alliance, WLB strategically relied on those member organisations more closely aligned to the governing party, the National League for Democracy, to take the lead on direct policy engagement.

In Timor-Leste, partners have largely been able to enjoy freely organising events and activities, but at times they do meet resistance from conservative forces including the church, 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. Partners are working actively to influence harmful gender norms which restrict equality in Timor-Leste, for example, Alola's monthly discussion targeting young people to look at gender norms and issues of inequality.

In PNG, 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. Further, there has been civil unrest in the Highlands, where partners VfC and EHFV 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. A particular challenge in PNG has come following the appointment of a new Prime Minister in 2019, who is openly unsupportive of TSMs. This is disappointing after progress in previous years in the WAVE program to build support for TSMs with the previous Prime Minister and politicians. Further, our 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, partners have enjoyed good cooperation in civil society and with provincial governments to advance their work and advocacy agenda. In the current environment, WAVE partner WRAM has been able to take forward a progressive agenda around TSMs. However, the country has a long way to go in terms of seeing changes in the number of women in roles of political leadership, with only three women in a parliament of 50 currently in place in the national parliament.

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 leading 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 mentoring programs to leaders and aspiring leaders; and offering counselling to current Executive Directors and leaders who are at risk of burnout, stress and isolation.

In relation to progressing lessons learned across the program, IWDA has implemented key recommendations from the 2018 Mid-Term Reflection as part of the WAVE program in 2019. These include setting up a specific working group to action 20 concrete program actions across the management and delivery of the program for the final two years. These include:

- Roll out of the draft *Plan your Power: Women's Rights Advocacy Toolkit* to three new countries, responding to the recommendation for further supports to joint advocacy.
- Invitation to leading international expert on women's movements, Srilatha Batliwala, to advise IWDA and WAVE on how to expand support to partners in movement strengthening skills.
- Implementation of new 'counselling', 'mentoring' and 'safeguarding' funds, responding to the recommendation to make resources available to react to new and emerging issues.
- Implementation of a learning exchange with seven partners on engaging men in preventing sexual and gender based violence, responding to the recommendation to resource additional shared-spaces for partner-to-partner learning.

Specific challenge noted in the completion of this report

At the time of writing, the COVID-19 global pandemic had just emerged, affecting all five WAVE partner countries and IWDA in Australia. Many partners' staff needed to relocate to working from home, with varied access to internet and communications. In addition, in the early period of 2020, Timor-Leste faced severe flooding across the country. This meant that verifying partners' quantitative data was challenging. In the interests of not placing additional strains and provoking unnecessary anxieties on partners at a time of great stress, IWDA has not been able to completely confirm the accuracy of all reported data from some partners in some cases. In the event that data is updated after the report submission date, IWDA commits to informing the FLOW team.

PIONE BOSQ, WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTION MOVEMENT,
SOLOMON ISLANDS. PHOTO: SIMON TOFFANELLO





**“ACTIVISM IS STILL ALIVE
AT THE LOCAL, NATIONAL
AND GLOBAL LEVELS
AND IT HAS PERSISTED
AGAINST ALL ODDS”**

SRILATHA BATIWALA SPEAKING AT WAVE'S 2019 PARTNER WORKSHOP



WAVE PARTNERS, L-R: NAW HSER HSER, CAMILLA BATALIBASI, SOPHEAP ROS, EVELIN MAMON
CHRISTINA BATAENG AND SOPHE KILPI. PHOTO: SIMON TOFFANELLO

COVER PHOTO: A WOMEN'S RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER CALLS FOR ACTION,
TIMOR-LESTE. PHOTO: HARLOND DUDORISNO



www.iwda.org.au/wave

 WaveWomen