

**Women Ignite Stability &
Economic Recovery (WISER) program
Women's Rights & Action Movement (WRAM)
Solomon Islands**

EVALUATION

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Acronyms

CEDAW	UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disability
DFAT	Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade
DWEA	Disability Women's Empowerment Association
EVAWG	Eliminating Violence against Women, Young Women and Girls
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWD	Gender Equity and Women's Development Policy
HCC	Honiara City Council
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
MPGIS	Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening
MWYCFA	Ministry of Women Youth and Child Affairs
NCW	National Women's Council
NWD	National Women's Dialogue
NYC	National Youth Congress
PCW	Provincial Council of Women
PGA	Provincial Government Assembly
PLP	Pacific Leadership Program
PWDSI	People with a Disability Solomon Islands
SINCW	Solomon Islands National Council of Women
SINU	Solomon Islands National University
SINWF	Solomon Islands National Women's Forum
TSM	Temporary Special Measures
VBMS	Vois Blong Mere Solomon
WARA	West Are'Are Rokotaniken Association
WAVE	Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment
WISER	Women Ignite Stability and Economic Recovery
WSP	National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security
WDD	Women's Development Division of the MWYCFA
WRAM	Women's Rights Action Movement
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association
YWMP	Young Women's Mentoring Program
YWF	Young Women's Forum
YWPG	Young Women's Parliamentary Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The WISER program (Women Ignite Stability and Economic Recovery) began in mid 2021 and ends December 2023. WISER has been implemented in a difficult context: COVID-19 restrictions, staff illness, delayed funding and geopolitical tensions have all hampered progress. So too have under-resourced staffing levels and the difficulties entailed in working in remote Provinces.

Despite the challenging work environment, the WISER program has achieved significant gains: Amongst these the most important are:

- WRAM's work to support young women in the movement has been effective for those women/girls involved. The energy and vitality of young women leaders was clear during the course of this evaluation. The evaluation found that the various ways that WRAM has tried to involve young women through 'active participation' is making a difference.
- The provincial campaign to increase women's political participation has been highly successful. Significant achievements have been made. All nine Solomon Island Provincial Government Assemblies (PGS) have endorsed Temporary Special Measures (TSM). Furthermore, signals are that the campaign to influence Honiara City Council (HCC) will, similarly, be successful. This evaluation found that WRAM's core partners, and many of its stakeholders, admire WRAM's stamina in carrying out this work. WRAM's partners – particularly the Ministry of Women, Women's Development Division and HCC - point out the excellent partnering relationship.
- WRAM has been effective in getting the Convenors' group to talk and cooperate. Members of the convening group have enjoyed the retreats and dialogues and welcomed the opportunity to openly discuss issues. Furthermore, the National Women's Dialogue agreeing 43 shared recommendations, which are being taken forward, is a significant achievement. The integration of young women in the women's rights movement is contributing to its sustainability.

WISER has also contributed to WRAM's organisational effectiveness. Four key gains were identified by WRAM staff:

- WISER has helped WRAM engage with Provincial communities. The TSM campaign has broadened WRAM's reach.
- WRAM has developed its advocacy skills. During the course on the TSM campaign, WRAM has developed significant skills, they have established networks and have become more strategic in how they achieve change.
- WISER has helped WRAM strengthen links with Solomon Island Government Ministries.
- WISER has built WRAM's confidence about a small organisation being able to achieve a lot. This confidence is evident among the team.

Recommendations from this evaluation:

As well as the document WISER's successes and lessons, there are series of recommendations from this strategic evaluation.

- 1) **Small Organisations have to be exceptionally strategic and develop skilled program management to work in different ways.** WISER's ambitious program of work has stretched each staff member. Given WRAM's low staffing levels, it is important to work strategically through and with others. This shift will require thinking strategically about how to carry out the work and potentially new sets of skills about how to support and train others to take on the work. The consultant's Provincial visit (carried out during this evaluation) found that much more could be done to support the Provincial Council of Women (PWC) and 'local

champions' to lead TSM advocacy. This work could be carried out in partnership with Solomon Islands Council of Women (SINCW) as well as with current partners. It is important to train trainers and support PCWs, Church Groups and Local Champions to take strong advocacy and awareness raising roles. This will mean training and supporting others to do the work. It will also involve actively engaging with SINCW and strengthening them to take up the challenge.

- 2) **WRAM should develop a coherent plan for nurturing young female future leaders and work with others to effectively deliver this program.** Young women are enthusiastic to take the lead in the women's movement. They are the future. The plan would have clear objectives and ways to engage, raise awareness and 'actively nurture' future leaders. The aim would be to create an active network of young women, supported with communications to ensure that young women feel 'part of a network', part of a movement and individually valued. The development of this active young women's movement would include WRAM's previous linking/inclusion work as well as: a) Supporting WRAM members to lead a program of work to engage with university students; b) Engaging more widely with young women in Church groups and young women's clubs (guides etc); c) Supporting a partner organisation to revitalise the mentoring program which was found to be effective; and d) working with SINCW to extend this work to the Provinces.
- 3) **There is more work to do on strengthening the Women's Movement in the Solomon Islands.** The importance of the women's movement cannot be underestimated. As many pointed out during the course of this evaluation, furthering women's rights can only be achieved through collective action. Ways to strengthen and grow the movement will include plans to strengthen and grow together through supporting some convenor organisations to strengthen their capacity. This will include investing in the SINCW as a significant partner - without their active participation, the movement can't successfully flourish in the Provinces. It would also include working with a partner (for example the Young Women's Christian Association) to revitalise a young women's mentoring program (see point 3 above). The inclusion of the Young Women's Parliamentary Group in the National Women's Dialogue has particularly been helpful. New voices and different perspectives have diluted old ways of relating.
- 4) **Increasingly strengthen WRAM's organisational capacity.** There are two ways that WRAM could invest in strengthening its own capacity. These are:
 - a. **Through developing clear TOC/Advocacy plans** A theory of change helps a team think through tactics, opportunities, allies (male and female), opponents and different ways to get things done in Solomon Islands. It is not static or fixed¹, but a useful and frequently used document to help a team think of the different opportunities to achieve change. There should be a TOC (or advocacy plan) for the national advocacy work: one for the Provincial TSM work; and one for the work to build the capacity of young women.
 - b. **Through strengthening MEL.** There is an urgent need to support WRAM staff to develop formal processes of periodic review and reflection. MEL frameworks should be developed as tools for reflection and improvement. Monitoring and learning should become live processes to help the team take time to reflect and monitor their work plans/program logic and TOC and answer key questions:
 - Are we doing the right things, at the right time to make the most difference?
 - Are the tactics achieving the results we want?

¹ Neither is it program outcomes drawn up in boxes.

- Are the results achieving the longer-term outcomes that we aim for?

Through the WISER program, the WRAM team have gained contacts, access to networks and developed their advocacy skills. A lot has been achieved, by WRAM, despite the odds. Indeed, WRAM has positioned itself as a leader in the Solomon Islands women's movement. The TSM campaign to further women's political inclusion has been highly successful. It is important to maintain these gains and think carefully through the next steps. This evaluation has shown there are strategic choices to make about how to work with, support and partner with others to strengthen the Solomon Islands women's movement.

It is hoped that this evaluation has provided ideas of how WRAM can build on their successes, partner with others and take their valuable work forward. WRAM has a crucial role to play, not only in furthering women's rights and increasing women's political participation, but also in contributing to Solomon Island development. It is clear that WRAM has the potential to play this role effectively but will need more support and funding to do so.

Section 1. Introduction

The Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM) is still a young organisation. WRAM was founded in 2011 by Solomon Islanders keen to forward gender equality. Initial work particularly focused on engaging the Solomon Island Government on reforming laws and policies. Over time, WRAM strategically moved into strengthening the Solomon Islands' women's movement and women's participation in leadership through positive discrimination. The WISER (Women Ignite Stability and Economic Recovery) program is key to this progression. WISER has four end of program outcomes (EPO). These are:

- Increased knowledge, skills and confidence of young women enables them to contribute to, and lead, gender equality in Solomon Islands.
- WRAM is a leading advocate for Government and duty bearers to respond and be made accountable to the rights of women and gender equality.
- WRAM is a dynamic leader in the women's rights space that works collaboratively with national partners in the women's movement to transform the lives of women and girls.
- WRAM strengthens its reputation and influence to leverage transformational change for women and girls.

WISER was funded through the Australian-based International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) by DFAT from June 2021 to December 2022 with an extension until December 2023.

1.1 Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to review WRAM's work to promote political participation, movement building and gender equality. To achieve this the consultants intentionally combined elements of program evaluation and organisational evaluation with a view to assess:

- The effectiveness of the WISER program; and
- The relevance and coherence of WRAM's strategies and movement-strengthening work.

The evaluation process and this report are expected to support WRAM's future strategic planning and delivery of its future programs (see Terms of Reference).

1.2 Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation answers five key questions as set out in the Terms of Reference. These are:

- Has the WISER program delivered effectively against its Program Outcomes²?
- What lessons have been learned through the WISER program about effective advocacy?
- How effective and appropriate was WRAM's contribution to movement-strengthening work, including cross-movement strengthening?
- How effective has WRAM been in selecting, planning and delivering its strategies?
- And has the WISER program contributed to WRAM's effectiveness as an organisation?

1.3 Methodology

In response to the Terms of Reference, the evaluation approach was qualitative and drew on strengths-based principles. The evaluation focused on what has been achieved; what has been the

² NB. The TOR asked for the evaluation to assess progress against WRAM's Theory of Change (TOC). However, in the absence of a TOC the consultants assessed delivery against WISER's Program Outcomes.

impact; what has been the learning; and how to improve future work. The approach was participatory and inclusive involving the WRAM staff in discussions both in their understanding of the work and the 'sense making' stage of the evaluation findings. Rigour was ensured through the stakeholder interviewing process with every attempt made to triangulate findings. The methodology had five key stages. These are detailed in Annex 3 and briefly described below:

1. **Desk review of WISER and WRAM documents:** A thorough analysis of WISER/WRAM documentation ensured that this evaluation built on previous knowledge/learning.
2. **Provincial Visit to Isabel and Western Provinces:** One of the consultants visited two provinces to explore the understanding of temporary special measures (TSM) and WRAM's work to influence Provincial Government Assemblies to endorse TSMs. The consultant held individual semi-structured interviews with Provincial leaders as well as community discussions in Kuzi and Nusa Baruku communities (Western) and in Kubolota community (Isabel Province). Please see Annex 1 for list of interviewees and community groups met and see Annex 3 for semi-structured interview questions.
3. **Key stakeholder interviews held in Honiara:** Semi-structured interviews were held with key stakeholders in Honiara: with members of the Women's Movement Convenors Group; key SIG Ministries; those supported in cross-movement work and with young women parliamentary group (see Annex 1 for list of interviewees).
4. **Self-Reflection by WRAM staff:** Each staff member was individually interviewed and asked to reflect on the WISER's successes, challenges and learning.
5. **Feedback and Sense-making workshop with WRAM staff and board.** Towards the end of this evaluation, a day-long workshop was held with staff and board members to workshop the evaluation findings, suggestions for the future and ways to move forward (see Annex 2 for outline of the day).

Inevitably, in a short process such as this, there will be some evaluation limitations. This evaluation was carried out during an extremely busy work period. TSM was gathering momentum in Guadalcanal and both staff and stakeholders were busy. In addition, recent changes in SIG and DFAT priorities, resulting in loss of funding for gender equality, led to fears over future funding opportunities. As a result of these and other issues, stakeholder meetings were hard to arrange and frequently rescheduled. Time pressures meant the consultants were unable to hold a WRAM team self-reflection workshop and the consultants spent valuable time on rearranging meetings. In addition, staff illness prevented greater contact with the WRAM team, and the consultants were unable to consult the WRAM Board. Nevertheless, the evaluation findings set out in this report were discussed, verified and validated at the final WRAM sense making workshop at the end of the evaluation. It is hoped that the learning embedded in this report is helpful to the WRAM team as they move forward with their work.

1.4 Prelude - difficult working context

Before introducing the evaluation findings, it is important to explain the context in which WRAM works. There are a number of reasons why WRAM's work has been delayed and, why the current Solomon Island context, is particularly challenging. Amongst them are:

- The WISER program was affected by COVID restrictions and other delays. COVID lockdowns in the first 18 months of the WISER program led to severe delays in WRAM's work and difficulties of communicating. These restrictions created challenges as (at that time) WRAM could not access internet banking. Furthermore, during early 2022 multiple staff members were sick with COVID, and travel bans delayed trips to the Provinces. In late 2021, the geopolitical tensions resulting in the Honiara riots also affected the work program.

- Secondly, the WISER program suffered from a late start. Due to a delay in signing the WISER agreement, WISER program funding arrived in Honiara during the third quarter of 2021.
- Thirdly, in November 2021, the Permanent Secretary (PS) for the Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) seriously undermined the WISER program. The PS changed his advice about the endorsement of Temporary Special Measures (TSM). The PS determined that TSM required full assembly endorsement, rather than Executive PGA, endorsement. This dealt WRAM a serious blow as WRAM had already secured Executive endorsement from a number of PGAs. It meant that all the Provinces, previously sensitised to TSM, needed revisiting. Furthermore, it meant that full assemblies had to be present to discuss TSM – a hard task in remote island Provinces.
- Fourthly, WRAM’s work is taking place in a context where there is growing competition for funding. The Geopolitical tensions of 2020-23 have led to altered funding decisions for gender work. The Solomon Island Government has recently undated its priorities to focus on other areas, resulting in partner governments reducing funding for gender equality. This accentuated competition for funding inevitably strained the women’s movement.
- Lastly and most importantly, WRAM, like all its feminist partner organisations, is working in an intensely patriarchal society. Gender inequality is deeply entrenched in Solomon Island culture. This affects all aspects of women’s/girls’ lives including their work aspirations, their health, their freedom, their personal safety and their access to resources. It also affects their ability to voice their opinions and their participation in decision making roles. It certainly affects their ability to be leaders. In this context WRAM has embarked on an ambitious program designed to give women/girls a voice and promote their political participation.

It is in this context that the WISER program was carried out. The evaluators are aware of this context and the difficulty of much of WRAM’s work.

1.5 Structure of this report

This report is structured to address the Terms of Reference.

Section 2 examines the achievements against each of WISER’s four program outcomes. It discusses:

- ❖ Key areas of work pertaining to each of the four End of Outcome areas;
- ❖ The effectiveness of the work carried out;
- ❖ The relevance and coherence of the work; and
- ❖ Lessons for moving forward.

Section 3 discusses the ways in which WISER has contributed to WRAM’s organisational effectiveness. **Section 4** examines the wider lessons that have been learned through the WISER program about effective advocacy. **Section 5** discusses how effective WRAM has been in selecting, planning and delivering its strategies and **Section 6** provides concluding comments³.

Please note that in writing up this report, stakeholders are quoted anonymously. This is in order to respect people’s privacy and encourage frank views in the evaluation process.

³ NB. Outcome 3 (pages 13-15) addresses the question of “how effective and appropriate was WRAM’s contribution to movement-strengthening work, including cross-movement strengthening”.

Section 2: Achievements Against Program Outcomes

EOP1. Increased Knowledge, skills and confidence of young women enables them to contribute to, and lead, Gender Equality in Solomon Islands.

2.1 Key areas of work under Outcome 1

Under End of Program Outcome (EOP1) One, the WISER program aspired to build intergenerational leadership in the women's movement. It wanted to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of young women to enable them to contribute. Through investing in future leaders, WRAM aimed to increase the sustainability of Solomon Islands' women's movement through nurturing and developing young leaders. During the course of the WISER programme WRAM's work against End of Program Outcome one included five key activities. These were:

- Hosting a **National Young Women's Dialogue** during November 2022. This two-day dialogue was entitled "Building a Strong Movement for Women and Young Girls through Dialogue". Thirty five young participants attended from women's organisations and provinces. A range of speakers facilitated sessions on diverse topics including: Temporary Special Measures (TSM), Gender Based Violence, Human Trafficking, Political Engagement, Economic Empowerment, Health Awareness, Gender and Climate Change and National Resource Management.
- **Involvement of younger women in the National Women's Dialogue.** WRAM intentionally convened the young women's forum before the larger National Women's Dialogue. Young women from the forum were thus invited to the five days 'National Dialogue'. This offered young women the opportunity to learn from seniors and grow their confidence in the national debate. Through their involvement WRAM hoped to foster young leaders of the women's movement.
- **Training for Government Policy Staff and Lawyers.** In December 2022, WRAM facilitated a three day workshop with Solomon Island Government (SIG) staff. Eighteen people attended, the majority of whom were young officers from various Ministries⁴. Participants were introduced to gender equality, human rights and international treaties and conventions such as CEDAW (UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women). The workshops enabled participants to understand how they can drive gender equality in their respective organisations.
- **Involving Young Women in the Shadow CEDAW Submission.** WRAM endeavoured to include young women in the CEDAW civil society submission. Young women's priorities included employment opportunities for those with tertiary qualifications and the impact of climate change on their generation. The aim was to build young women's competence ensuring their ability to participate in future CEDAW reporting.
- **Review of the Young Women's Mentoring Program.** The young women's mentoring program was started by WRAM in 2017 and continued to 2021. This program involved ten young women paired with mentors. During the course of the WISER program, WRAM

⁴ Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services; Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening; Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs.

reviewed this initiative as part of its focus to encourage and facilitate the effective participation of young women in the women's movement⁵.

2.2. How effective has this work been?

WRAM's work to support young women in the movement has been effective for those women/girls involved. The energy and vitality of young women leaders was clear during the course of this evaluation. The evaluators found that the various ways that WRAM has tried to involve young women in the debates and grow their confidence through 'active participation' is making a difference. The inter-generational collaboration in the broader women's movement is contributing to the sustainability of the Women's Rights Movement. In particular:

- **The National Young Women's Forum was successful.** Pre- and post-evaluation participant forms indicated the increased knowledge across a number of topics especially TSM, CEDAW, Political parties and saving clubs. Young women provided positive feedback on having "safe space to discuss sensitive issues such as reproductive health and cancer awareness". Another dialogue recipient added, "some of the topics we have discovered are new to me and one is the Political Parties Commission. This topic is an eye-opener for me... I came to realise that politics is not about man or a politician: rather it is about the life of people in this country"⁶.
- **Involving young women in the National Women's Dialogue.** The involvement of young women in national women's fora has also been effective. Young Solomon Islander women are keen to learn and keen to participate. As one young woman stakeholder put it "listening to their dialogue, learning from their experiences, learning from their leadership qualities is all good for us". She added, "what WRAM is doing is keeping the women's movement going".
- **Mentoring program.** A review of the mentoring program completed in August 2023, illustrated the complementarity of a mentoring program to the young women's 'exposure' work carried out by WRAM. The August 2023 evaluation found the mentoring programme had achieved its objective of "raising young women's confidence through their exposure to new knowledge on different subjects"⁷. It recommended a second round of mentoring in the near future.

Stakeholder Feedback

"This work has been a huge plus for WRAM"

"Slowly the women's movement is growing"

"Young women are enthusiastic to take the lead"

"WRAM needs a comms person; we need updates from WRAM, to inspire young women and feel part of a formal movement"

2.3 The relevance and coherence of Outcome 1

Nurturing young leaders is key to WRAM's strategy of growing the women's movement and was found to be important to young Solomon Islander women. As one young stakeholder stated, "what WRAM is doing is keeping the women's movement going. Young women are more innovative and creative".

Afu Billy (2023) in the review of the young women's mentoring programme goes one step further. She writes:

⁵ The young women's mentoring program was set up under the Women's Action and Voice Empowerment Program (WAVE) funded by the Netherlands Government.

⁶ Pre and post evaluation forms from National Young Women's Dialogue, 10th-11th November 2022.

⁷ Ms Afu Billy: Review of the Young Women's Mentoring Programme (YWMP) of the Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM), Honiara, August 2023. P.4

“Older women leaders who are saturating the leadership space in the Women’s Movement [need to] relinquish their positions of leadership roles and make way for young women to start effectively engaging in the Movements Leadership space”. She continues that the need is now here to “capacity build young women through initiatives such as the [mentoring program] to prepare and groom them to enter the movement”. [ibid. p.4]

The evaluation found WRAM’s work to increase the knowledge and confidence of young women to take the leadership reins is welcomed by young and older women. This is seen as vital by many and part of the transition to the next generation.

In terms of coherence, the evaluators found there is compatibility between WRAM’s work to support future leaders and work to support the women’s movement. However, there is more work to do on the ‘internal coherence’ and ‘interlinkage’ between the activities to support young women. The activities to support young women can seem disparate and/or un-linked. The evaluation found that WISER had carried out a series of activities with young women, rather than a coherent program of work to develop and nurture young women to take the reins of the women’s movement.

As some stakeholders argued, there is more work to be done on creating coherence and weaving young women into the movement. One stakeholder saying:

“WRAM could keep young women involved by creating a formal network, by showing women they are valued, by providing quarterly updates [particularly on the NWD Recommendations], so that women would know what is happening and feel part of something”. There is a need for a communications strategy to ensure that the young women feel ‘part’ of something and ‘valued’.

2.4 Lessons from Outcome 1 for WRAM to consider

The evaluation suggests there are two key lessons from outcome 1 for WRAM to consider. These are interlinked.

2.4.1 WRAM could develop a coherent plan for nurturing young women as future leaders and work with others to effectively deliver this program.

This plan would be more than a series of activities with young women. The plan would have clear objectives and ways to engage, raise awareness and actively nurture future leaders. The aim would be to create an active network of young women which is supported with interactive communications (between young women and with WRAM) to ensure that young women feel ‘part of a network’, part of a movement and individually valued. The development of this active young women’s movement would include WRAM’s existing work to support and include young women as well as working with and supporting others to nurture young women leaders. This could include:

- Supporting a partner organisation [potentially the Young Women’s Christian Association, YWCA] to revitalise the young girls mentoring program. This program was found to be valued, popular and effective⁸. Given WRAM’s workload it would be helpful to work through partners, which already have experience in this field, to take this mentoring work forward.
- Supporting WRAM members to develop a program of work to engage with young students at the University of Solomon Islands. This work could be led by WRAM’s professional members [not WRAM staff] and could include a series of panel discussions, or debates on

⁸ Ms Afu Billy: Review of the Young Women’s Mentoring Programme (YWMP) of the Women’s Rights Action Movement (WRAM), Honiara, August 2023.

gender and rights. The aim being to increase WRAM membership and encourage young women and men to engage with the topics and ultimately become advocates for women's rights. These students are Solomon Island's future leaders.

- Supporting professional WRAM members to go into schools and facilitate workshop sessions on issues pertinent to teenage girls. This would help young girls to see their own potential and gain exposure to the issues.
- Engaging more widely with a diverse group of young women e.g. from Church groups and young women's clubs (guides etc) thus ensuring that WRAM engages with a varied cohort.
- Supporting Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW) to extend this work to the Provinces.

2.4.2 The plan for nurturing and networking future women leaders should have clear objectives, clear outcomes and be properly monitored. Good monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) practices would enable the WRAM team to assess progress, determine what is/isn't working and adapt its strategy/plan. There is a body of good practice around the MEL of leadership programs⁹: the MEL of networks and the MEL of mentoring programs. It is important that WRAM sees MEL as part of its work, obtains regular feedback from the young women and tailors its program to grow and nurture future leaders.

⁹ See the Pacific Leadership Program MEL.

EOP2: WRAM is a leading advocate for Government and Duty Bearers to Respond and be made accountable to the rights of women and gender equality.

3.1 Key areas of work for Outcome 2

WRAM's work under End of Program Outcome two has been significant. Over the last two years, this has been a key aspect of WRAM's work. Under this outcome the WISER program aspired to become a leading advocate for ensuring Government is held accountable to the rights of women. During the course of the WISER program, this work has included:

- **Leading a TSM provincial campaign.** WRAM has worked alongside its partners to campaign for more women in politics through instituting reserved seat systems or candidate quotas. WRAM, with its partners - the Ministry of Women (MWYCFA), the MWYCFA Women's Development Division (WDD) and the Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW) - has worked energetically to increase the acceptance of women leaders amongst community groups and TSM endorsement by PGAs across the Solomon Islands. This work has taken WRAM and its partners to each of the nine provincial islands. Furthermore, it has involved community sensitisation consultations in tens of thousands of island communities¹⁰.
- **Developing a National TSM campaign.** At the national level, WRAM has focused efforts on securing legislative change for TSM by the Solomon Island's Parliament. WRAM's political networks have helped navigate the national political context, particularly leveraging support from the Minister of Women and the Secretary to the Prime Minister.
- **Advocating for Honiara City Council to endorse TSM:** Within Honiara, WRAM formed a working group with partners from SIG and others (SINCW, HCC and the MWYCFA WDD) to assist their advocacy of Honiara City Council. This work involved public awareness campaigning, including community consultations throughout Honiara, and direct advocacy with HCC Counsellors.
- **Supporting the rights of Solomon Islanders living with disabilities.** As part of the WISER Program, WRAM engaged in a partnership with Persons with Disability Solomon Islands (PWDSI). PWDSI's was seeking Cabinet endorsement of the National Disability Policy and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). WRAM helped progress this work by raising awareness about the policy and the convention and financing working group members to convene.
- **Review of National Gender Policies:** During 2022, WRAM participated in the MWYCFA's Women's Development Division policy workshop. This workshop aimed at validating the national Gender Equality and Women's Development and Ending Violence against Women and Girls Policies. WRAM joined others to review changes to the gender policy landscape, assess progress and identify five year priorities. During this workshop, WRAM emphasised the importance of including women and girls with disabilities in all plans (not only laws and policies). WRAM also urged SIG to meet expectations under the Family Protection Act by funding services for victims of gender-based violence.

¹⁰ WRAM is based in Honiara in the Province of Guadalcanal. The campaign has taken WRAM and its partners to each of the provincial islands: Renbel, Makira, Malaita, Central Islands Province, Western Province, Temotu, Isable and Choiseul.

3.2 How effective has this work been?

TSM Campaign: The provincial TSM campaign has been highly successful. All nine Solomon Island Provincial Government Assemblies (PGS) have endorsed TSM. Furthermore, indications are that the advocacy campaign to influence Honiara City Council will, similarly, be successful. At the time of this evaluation, the HCC Executive had indicated its support for TSM.

The TSM campaign has not been easy. It has traversed significant hurdles: In late 2021, the Ministry of Provincial Government changed its advice ensuring that TSM requires full PGA endorsement rather than the executive assembly. Thus, this campaign has taken enormous amounts of effort and time. Furthermore, it has taken WRAM, and its partners, to remote Provinces. WRAM, alongside its partners, have had to work in different languages, with different customs and in changing and challenging political environments.

This evaluation found that WRAM's partners and many of its stakeholders admire WRAM's fortitude and stamina in carrying out this work. WRAM's partners – particularly MWYCFA, the MWYCFA Women's Development Division and HCC point out the excellent partnering relationship. They say that WRAM has been flexible and responsive and helped them finance activities in order to render the campaign successful. Notably, this included financing additional manpower for boats when travelling in remote areas and paying for food while PGA Members met late at night or during the weekend.

The provincial visits, carried out during this course of this evaluation, indicated that Western and Isabel PGAs are generally supportive of TSM. Although many in the provinces are unaware of WISER (or indeed, of WRAM) they are sensitised to the TSM issues as a result of WRAM and its partners work¹¹. Furthermore, some influential assembly members are keen to be involved in the campaign: this includes the Deputy Premier of Western Provincial Government and the Hon Member of Ward 5 in Isabel Province. The Provincial visits, carried out as part of this evaluation, emphasised the importance of keeping up the campaign momentum as people's views easily change. This is true of both provincial government leaders and of the community. There remains work to be done in consistently working with communities to ensure continued support for women in leadership. In a deeply patriarchal culture, it takes more than a sensitisation meeting to change people's views. There are multiple influences on people's opinions and a sensitization meeting is just one influence. This is on-going work.

Supporting the rights of people living with disabilities: WRAM's support for the disability rights has also been effective. PWDSI is grateful for WRAM's small financial support in this area. The endorsement of the National Disability Development Policy in November 2022 was a significant achievement for PWDSI. Furthermore, Parliament's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) was another major milestone for

Stakeholder feedback

"WRAM has been very effective on TSM"

"Many times we couldn't do it without them"

"Women's Division wouldn't have been able to work without WRAM"

"WRAM helped MWYCFA reach out to rural and remote places"

"WRAM knew the culture – and helped us pay for things we needed to pay for"

Stakeholder feedback

"Our culture really holds back women from fully participating"

"Perhaps WRAM can do more work in the province, they need to be consistently visiting communities, women sacrificing for another woman"

"Men should open the pathways for us to move on with this TSM idea, because they are the ones that see us women as threats in the political arena"

¹¹ NB. WRAM doesn't brand its work in the Provinces so low awareness of its name is expected.

PWDSI. This ratification comes after a decade of advocacy. The endorsement and ratification play an important role in ensuring that people with disabilities can increasingly participate in different aspects of society. They are also keen to be involved with WRAM. The potential inclusion of the Disability Women's Empowerment Association (DWEA) in the National Women's Dialogue is seen as a positive step to ensure future engagement.

On a broader level, WRAM's legal work to stop laws discriminating women is well respected by stakeholders. During the course of this evaluation, many stakeholders and partners lauded WRAM's significant expertise in this area. Each organisation spoken with, during the course of this evaluation, commented on WRAM's legal expertise. WRAM is indeed the leading advocate in holding the government to account for the rights of women and gender equality.

Stakeholder feedback

"WRAM is a good friend. They came in and helped. In the future we would like to engage with WRAM more especially when looking at gaps in legislation".

"We are always asking WRAM for help with different bits of legislation"

"they have young women lawyers. This is a critical gap in the Solomon Islands".

3.3 The relevance and coherence of WISER's work to hold duty bears accountable

The importance of positive discrimination (TSM) for women to enter politics was found to be supported by most women in the Solomon Islands. This campaign is seen as important to achieving momentum in the rights of women. The absence of women in political leadership positions (4 women out of 50 national MPs), and their relative absence in the provinces, is a dire reflection of the deeply patriarchal society. All women stakeholders, spoken to during the course of this evaluation, supported TSM and perceive this as central to women rights in Solomon Islands.

However, some stakeholders (both male and female) alluded to enormous challenge of increasing women political leaders. This was a theme also raised in the Provinces. If TSM in Provincial Government Assemblies gets endorsed by National Parliament, significant work is needed to prepare women to campaign, take office and have confidence in their decision-making abilities. In the light of reduced funding, one stakeholder commented "I'm very concerned if TSM gets accepted, then they will call on us to prepare women for the TSM provision. This will be a lot of work. The work goes on".

Another stakeholder explained that it takes many years for women to gain confidence to speak alongside men. They said, "although we have 4 women National MPs, only 1 of them will speak in Parliament". Yet other another stakeholder pointed out the temporary nature of the TSM endorsement by PGAs. Although TSM has been endorsed by all nine Provincial Government Assemblies, in four years' time further work will be needed to support TSM in the provinces as elections run in four year cycles. Furthermore, the current PGA fixation on gaining federal status will again throw up the question of quota or reserve seats. Clearly this is a long road and the ratification of TSM at provincial level is simply one rung of a high ladder. Nevertheless, it is relevant. It is an important step in the path for greater gender equality.

3.4 Lessons from Outcome 2 for WRAM to consider

Though the TSM campaign has been highly successful in terms of achieving PGA endorsement, there are many lessons for WRAM. The WRAM team (which at the start of the campaign was only 4 staff¹²) has worked effectively alongside volunteers and its partners. Partners and stakeholder see that WRAM has been ‘spread thinly’. They have tried to do too much with too small a team. In such circumstances, the importance of being strategic and working through, and with, others was emphasised by stakeholders during the course of this evaluation. So too, was the importance of leading a strong national TSM campaign which runs parallel to the provincial campaign. The following lessons were discussed with WRAM staff at the sense making workshop.

3.4.1 Develop the Strategy for working through partners in the Provinces

Given WRAM’s low staffing levels, it is important to work strategically through and with others. As detailed in this report, WRAM has worked closely with MWYCFA and the Women’s Development Division and SINCW. Moving forward it could be important to actively partner with the SINCW to really engage in the Provinces¹³. The consultant’s Provincial visit (carried out during this evaluation) found that much more could be done to support PCWs and ‘local champions’ to lead TSM advocacy. It is important to train trainers and support PCWs, Church Groups and Local Champions to take strong advocacy and awareness raising roles. This evaluation found there is enormous work to do to maintain the TSM gains as well as take the work forward. Within the Provinces, people are keen to be involved and WRAM’s advocacy should not rely solely on team visits from Honiara. It has to involve training others to take this work forward.

Local groups require information, training, statistics and support. They need to be part of a network of ‘actors’ taking part in the campaign and (like the young women leaders) need to be updated and valued as part of a movement. This would mean that WRAM carries out fewer Provincial visits and is more strategic in orchestrating a campaign from Honiara. WRAM’s role would be to train and support others in advocating and in raising community awareness.

3.4.2 Strengthening TSM Advocacy at National Level

While the TSM provincial campaign has taken large amounts of WRAM’s time, the same attention has not been paid to national level advocacy. As one stakeholder commented, there should have been equal attention over the last two years on influencing national decision makers on TSM. Another said, “This campaign needs to be targeted, strategic and tactical. It also needs to be subtle”. National level work will entail different tactics and different ways of working. WRAM needs to focus on policy leaders and decision makers at the highest level.

An advocacy plan could include Partners, WRAM members, stakeholders, volunteers. Each with the job of seeking out MPs, or senior decision makers, to influence on TSM.

¹² The WRAM team consisted of a Program Manager, an Accountant, an Advocacy Partnership and Networking Officer and a Legal Officer.

¹³ Working with PCWs necessitates improved working relationship with the SINCW and an MOU with the SINCW and PCWs. See section 3 for more on this.

A plan may include:

- Involving WRAM's key professional membership who have contacts, *Wontoks* and friends. Each would have a target to influence with 'soft', 'tactful' advocacy. Each person would need an 'elevator pitch' (or 3 minute statement) to convince that person of TSM's value. They would attend dinner parties, drinks, cava halls, sports events etc. with a view to engaging with key individuals.
- Involving men. It is vital to enlist men in the women's leadership debate. Male allies are going to key to influencing other men to enable women to engage. At the moment, WRAM works mainly through women's networks, however engaging men and having them function as allies/advocates will be essential to campaign success.
- Media/communications. The positive engagement of 'friendly' media in the campaign would be helpful. So too, would be ensuring communications between those who are involved in the campaign, so they feel supported, networked and part of achieving positive political change.

3.4.3 Explore different forms of communicating the value of TSM in the Provinces and work with others to deliver

There are numerous ways of communicating values other than through meetings and workshops. In the future, WRAM could consider the value of theatre, role play and radio in communicating the importance of women's leadership in the Provinces. WRAM has a successful board that works in many different forms of media (social media, TV, theatre) and has a staff member who is trained in communications. It would be exciting to see how WRAM could use different media to support partners to communicate the importance of women's leadership within the Provinces.

It should be emphasised that undertaking this work at Provincial level (albeit through partners) and at National level would require more resourcing for WRAM.

EOPO 3: WRAM is a Dynamic Leader in the Women's Rights space that works collaboratively with National Partners in the Women's Movement to transform the lives of women and girls.

4.1 Key areas of work for Outcome 3.

WISER's End of Program Outcome Three focuses on creating a vibrant women's movement in the Solomon Islands. During the last two years, WRAM has focused considerable effort on reconnecting with the National Women's Forum and creating the National Women's Dialogue in order to strengthen the women's movement. During the course of the WISER program, key activities included:

- **Convening a two day retreat for the National Women's Forum in June 2022.** The aim of this retreat was to strengthen the convenors' partnership, ensuring transparency between members and clarifying how different organisational mandates could complement each other. This retreat was facilitated remotely due to a COVID travel ban. It was attended by 49 participants from WRAM, West 'Are Are Rokotaniken Association (WARA), SINCW, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Young Women's Parliamentary Group (YWPG) and Voice Blo Mere (WBM).
- **Hosting a National Women's Dialogue (NWD) in November 2022.** In November 2022, WRAM organised a 5-day national women's dialogue attended by 75 women. Women from across Honiara came together to discuss policy and legislative reform (including TSM and CEDAW) and other topics such as GBV laws, human trafficking, reproductive health, climate change and women's economic empowerment. The keynote speech was given by the Minister of Women. This National Women's Dialogue produced 43 shared recommendations addressing issues such as decision making, governance and leadership, eliminating GBV and economic empowerment.
- **Hosting a Provincial Women's Dialogue December 2022.** Subsequent to the national women's dialogue, a 3-day provincial women's dialogue was held in Central Islands Province. This dialogue was attended by 35 women and produced a set of recommendations for further action aimed at relevant Central Island Provincial Departments. The Central Islands Provincial Council of Women (PCW) will support the dissemination and follow up of the recommendations with target stakeholders.
- **Coordination of CEDAW civil society reporting:** In April 2023, WRAM led the Solomon Islands civil society shadow reporting process on CEDAW. To develop this submission, WRAM hosted a 3 day workshop with 14 women's organisations in Honiara. The workshop introduced CEDAW and the reporting process. The submission emphasised key issues facing women/girls in Solomon Islands.
- **Follow-up session with the Minister of Women on the NWD's Recommendations.** In June 2023, three of the National Women's Dialogue (SINCW, YWPG and YWCA) met with the Minister of Women to follow up the NWD finalised recommendations. As a result of considerable work by WRAM, at this meeting, the Minister declared her support for TSM.
- **NWD Convenors agreed on advocacy:** In June 2023, the NWD Convenors met to discuss an advocacy strategy to take forward the Dialogue recommendations. As a result of this

meeting, different organisations have taken leadership on advancing recommendations that align with their respective audience and mandate.

4.2 How effective has this work been?

WRAM has been effective in getting the Convenors' group to talk and cooperate. Members of the convening group have enjoyed the retreats and dialogues and welcomed the opportunity to openly discuss issues. Furthermore, the National Women's Dialogue agreeing 43 shared recommendations, which are being taken forward, is a significant achievement. So too, is gaining the support of the Minister of Women for this work. All convening members spoke enthusiastically about WRAM's legal support, and the passing of the single-use plastics legislation has also been encouraging.

The women's movement has benefited from the inclusion of young women. The inclusion of the Young Women's Parliamentary Group has particularly been helpful. New voices and different perspectives have diluted old ways of relating. The potential addition of the Disability Women's Empowerment Association (DWEA) to the Convenors' group would also be helpful. Furthermore, the women's movement has been strengthened by the increasingly use of technology (particularly zoom) during COVID restrictions.

However, the Solomon Island's Women's Movement is still in its infancy. Its growth has been impeded by the competition between agencies and individual friction, rather than mutual support. Despite WRAM's attempts to foster collegiality amongst the Convenors' Group, there remains what one stakeholder called 'unfortunate territoriality'. Some convenors feel that WRAM 'treads on our toes'. Other's organisations want WRAM to work more closely with them and share what, they consider, the large amounts of funding that WRAM receives. One stakeholder said, "instead of implementing, they [WRAM] should work with others to implement when it's not their mandate".

Stakeholder comments

"We need to share our work and avoid clashes".

"They would like some side-funding. It's important to help other organisations that are struggling"

"We feel that some of our ideas are being used to get funding".

"We really need all women to work together"

"WRAM needs to be a mediator"

4.3 The relevance and coherence of outcome 3

The importance of the women's movement work cannot be underestimated. In a Melanesian context where communal collectivity is deeply cultural, cooperation, and collaboration between the women's organisations is central to impact. As many pointed out during the course of this evaluation, furthering women's rights can only be achieved through collective action. The importance of a mutually supportive and genuinely collegial Women's Movement is important to collectively working on gender equity and achieving progress on women's rights. During the course of this evaluation, male and female stakeholders frequently alluded to the importance of women working together. They pointed out that male opponents easily undermine women's leadership by exploiting personal rifts. Furthermore, it became clear during the course of this evaluation that WRAM's provincial work on TSM would be significantly strengthened if the national women's movement was more cohesive. This is because WRAM could work more effectively through and with the Provincial Council of Women (see below).

4.4. Lessons from Outcome 3 for WRAM to consider

There is more work to do on strengthening the Women's Movement in the Solomon Islands. Lessons from this work were threefold.

4.4.1. Develop a movement-wide strengthening plan to take the Women's Movement to the next stage.

This may include:

- Plans to strengthen and grow together through supporting the Convenor organisations to strengthen Governance.
- Invest in the SINCW as a significant partner, without which the movement can't successfully flourish in the Provinces.
- Sharing progress updates and annual plans between convening organisations to avoid duplication and improve coordination.
- Encouraging "Toks stori" (face to face dialogue) in Honiara between members of the National Women's Dialogue, so that issues don't fester.
- Strengthening investment and support for young women who are keen to take the women's movement forward (see suggested lessons outcome 1). Young women are vital to the future of the women's movement. They bring in new ideas and new insights. Enthusiastic and energised young women with different perspectives and different ways of working can overcome old dynamics and create new ways of working/relating.

4.4.2 Work through the SINCW to extend out to and strengthen the Provincial Women's Movement.

There is significant potential to strengthen the Solomon Islands Women's Movement through greater connections to provincial groups. During the course of this evaluation, the provincial council of women (PCW) and church groups expressed interest in working with WRAM on TSM. Such engagement would only be possible through active partnership with SINCW and through national church groups. Memoranda of Understanding and greater engagement with SINCW and with PCWs could significantly strengthen the women's movement. Additional resourcing would be required for WRAM and SINCW to undertake this work including budgets for provincial visits to train trainers.

EOPO 4: WRAM Strengthens its reputation to leverage transformational change for women and girls

5. Key areas of work for Outcome 4.

As part of the WISER advocacy, WRAM has continued to disseminate its 2019 research on the Perceptions of Women in Leadership Pathways Research¹⁴. This research underlines the support for women leaders: 88% of those interviewed thought that there should be more women in Provincial Assemblies; whereas 92% support TSM (once they had been informed of what this meant). However, many were concerned about women being unprepared for the role. This Women in Leadership Pathways research was used as part of WRAM's consultations with the Minister of Women, the Minister of Provincial Government and the Minister of Home Affairs. Furthermore, the Director of Women's Development Division has used this research in her presentations to the Honiara City Council and in her work to champion women's leadership.

5.1 What has been achieved?

During the course of the WISER program, WRAM has strengthened its reputation as a leader of the Women's Movement and a driver of change. It is too early to talk about 'transformational change'. However, if TSM is ratified by Parliament and reserved and/or quota seats are implemented by PGAs, this will amount to a significant step forward for women's rights. It will also have the potential to significantly strengthen WRAM's reputation and influence. It will be important for WRAM to document the process of influence used to support TSM ratification and WRAM's influence and role in building an effective coalition.

¹⁴ This research interviewed 723 men and women in Western and Malaita Provinces and in Honiara along with 18 focused group discussions and 99 informant interviews. It was carried out by WRAM in 2019 under the WAVE program.

Section 3. Has WISER contributed to WRAM's organisational effectiveness?

The TOR asks if WISER has contributed to improving WRAM's organisational effectiveness. The answer is yes in a number of key ways. Five areas of change were identified by WRAM staff. These are outlined below.

- **WISER has helped WRAM engage with Provincial communities.** The TSM campaign has broadened WRAM's reach. Its engagement in the provinces have led to WRAM listening and engaging with rural women's voices, often for the first time. The WISER program has also helped MWYCA engage with rural communities and strengthen engagement with Provincial Women's Desk Officers. There is huge potential to continue to support partners' engagement with the PCW, Mothers Unions, the Churches and local champions in rural areas. This would boost the confidence of provincial women and strengthen their work on the women's movement. As one staff member commented "we need rural women's voice".
- **WISER has helped WRAM reinvigorate the women's dialogue in Honiara.** Cooperation and collaboration was lacking in amongst the National Women's Forum. WISER has injected new life into the National Women's Dialogue and reinvigorated the group. The NWD has benefited from the WISER work and hopefully will grow more cohesive in the next phase.
- **WRAM has developed its advocacy skills.** During the course on the TSM campaign, WRAM has developed significant skills, they have established networks and have become more strategic in what they do. This is work in progress, but WRAM has come a long way. One stakeholder commented, "the approach to advocacy and to the women's movement has significantly changed. The WRAM team have really grown in terms of thinking strategically". One WRAM team member explained during the course of this evaluation, "this work has built my personal advocacy skills and my own confidence".
- **WISER has helped WRAM strengthen links with Solomon Island Government Ministries.** The WISER program and particularly the NWD recommendations have ensured that WRAM engages with different SIG Ministries¹⁵. This engagement has built contacts and allies with officers who can take gender equity issues forward. It is an area to capitalise in the future.
- **WISER has built WRAM's confidence about a small organisation being able to achieve a lot.** The WISER program has been demanding. The successes of the partnerships – and particularly the PGA's endorsement of TSM, has led WRAM to grow in confidence about their ability to achieve change. This confidence is evident among the team.

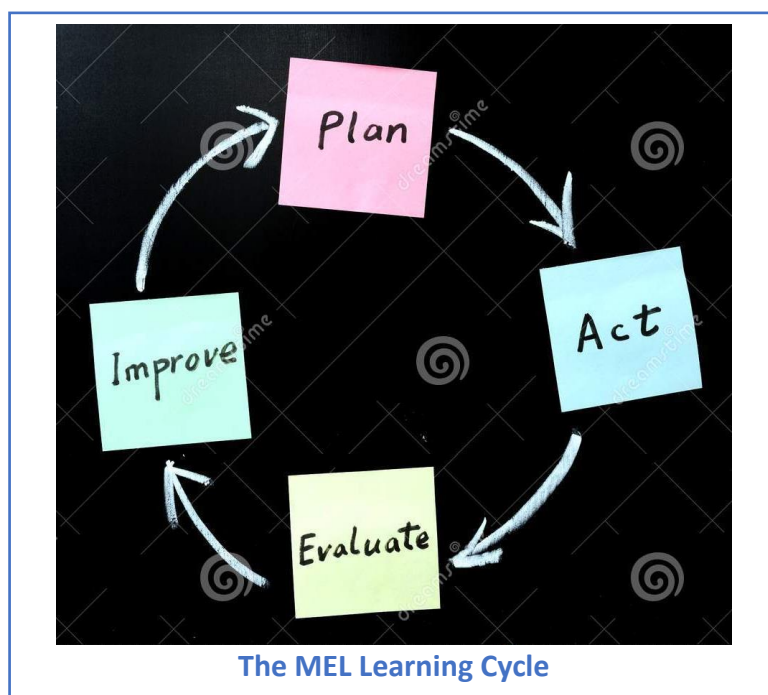
What the WISER program hasn't done is improve WRAM's monitoring, evaluation and learning skills. Due to COVID restrictions, a three day on-line training was given to the WRAM in April 2022. These sessions covered core MEL concepts and training in MEL data collection and analysis. Tools such as staff journals, pre and post training surveys, policy maker surveys were shared with the team. In October 2022, WRAM further attended a DFAT MEL workshop in Honiara. There is, however, more work to do in supporting the whole team to use MEL processes to help them learn, reflect on and strategize about their advocacy work.

¹⁵ For example the Ministry of Forestry and Fisheries; Ministry of Health, Environment, Labour and Provincial Government.

The WISER MEL framework is underused or not used. This is problematic. Indeed, there was little or no monitoring information to draw upon for this evaluation¹⁶. In recent times, to reduce WRAM's workload, IWDA has developed a 'narrative reporting process'. This has relied on IWDA using WhatsApp interviews with WRAM staff to provide updates on work. Such a process has to be an interim measure. It doesn't help the team to reflect, learn and strategically adapt their tactics as their work progresses.

There is an urgent need to support WRAM staff to develop formal processes of periodic review and reflection. WRAM needs support in developing an organisational-wide MEL framework supporting the team to plan, reflect, analysis/learn and re-plan its work (see diagram below). MEL should be included in each staff member's job description. MEL frameworks should be used and moreover useful to the WRAM team. Monitoring and learning should become a live process helping the team take time to reflect and monitor their work and answer key questions:

- Are we doing the right things, at the right time to make the most difference?
- Are the tactics achieving the results we want?
- Are the results achieving the longer term outcomes that we aim for?



¹⁶ The evaluation consultants had to rely heavily on reports to donors.

Section 4: What lessons have been learned from WISER about Effective Advocacy?

The TORs ask what lessons have been learned about advocacy. Many lessons have already been explored in this evaluation report, particularly the ability of a small team to do so much with little support. During the course of the sense-making workshop at the end of the evaluation, a number of lessons arose from discussions. These are further explored below.

- **Small Organisations have to be very strategic and work through/with others.**

WRAM is still a small organisation. The ambitious program of work set out under the WISER has stretched each staff member. As a result, some staff members have been frequently ill, and others feel ‘burnt out’. This is not sustainable. Though WRAM took on volunteers to invigorate the WISER program, each volunteer needs support and training. Furthermore, young staff need capacity building.

There are two lessons from this: Firstly, it’s important to be reflect clearly on what is possible given the staffing levels of the organisation; and to be strategic in how the work is done. As one stakeholder said during the course of this evaluation,

“the whole thing is the strategy: WRAM is a great organisation. It’s authentic. They speak across different levels. But it’s spread too thinly and trying to do activities instead of doing advocacy”.

Secondly, it has become clear that WRAM needs to work more effectively through Provincial partners and provincial local champions in the Provinces. In order to build a movement for change, WRAM needs to be strategic in working through, and with, others. This will mean training and supporting others to do the work. It will also involve actively engaging with SINCW and strengthening them to take up the challenge.

- **Theory of Change/advocacy Plans are important**

A theory of change is a live, active document. A theory of change helps a team think through tactics, opportunities, allies (male and female), opponents and different ways to get things done. It is not static or a fixed¹⁷, but a useful and used document to help a team think of the different opportunities to achieve change. The absence of a theory of change – or indeed an advocacy plan – has hampered the WRAM team. IWDA could provide support to WRAM to develop successive TOCs as they move forward. There should be a TOC (or advocacy plan) for the national advocacy work: and one for the Provincial TSM work taken forward by partners. These TOCs/advocacy plans should explore opponents and allies, different techniques/ways to carry out the work and ways to garner the support of others. They should also investigate ways of influencing such as through theatre, radio etc. With active MEL and reflection processes (see MEL above in Section 3), the WRAM team would find it easier to determine whether the tactics are making progress and contributing to expected outcomes.

¹⁷ Neither is it Program Outcomes drawn up in boxes.

Section 5. How effective has WRAM been in selecting, planning and delivering its strategies?

Finally, the TOR asks about WRAM's effectiveness in selecting, planning and delivering its organisational strategies. Between 2021 and 2023, WRAM had four overarching objectives set out in its strategic plan. Each of these objectives has sub-areas of work. A summary of these is set out below:

Objective 1. WRAM is a leading advocate for Government and duty bearers to respond and be made accountable to the rights of women for gender equity. This includes the following:

- Human rights and other international and national policy and legislative frameworks and gender equality commitments are monitored and reported against and upheld in Solomon Islands. (including CEDAW, GEWD, EVAWG, WSP¹⁸).
- Advocating for Temporary Special Measures for women leadership, including political leadership at all levels of government.
- Advocating for an enabling environment for Women's Economic Empowerment in Laws and Policies.

Objective 2: WRAM is a dynamic, resourceful, strategic lobbyist and leader in the women's rights space; working collaboratively alongside a strong, inclusive, cohesive and influential women's movement transforming the lives of women and girls. This includes the following:

- Women's movement building initiatives: Create and collaborate with the Solomon Islands National Women's Forum Convenors in our focus areas of work.

Objective 3: WRAM is an effective, dynamic, robust and reputable organisation that shows leadership on advocating for women, young women and girls' rights in Solomon Islands. This includes:

- Commit and engage (invest in the board and staff retreats and motivate staff).
- Develop technical service delivery and logistics (including the commitment to embed MEL capacity and practices in WRAM's team and project management).
- Relate and attract (including develop communications tools: strengthen WRAM's relationship with SINWF convenor organisations and ensure trust is present to maximise the impact of the women's movement).

Objective 4: WRAM possesses a reputation for its active commitment and engagement in research to build an evidence base to inform policy and legislative reform translating to transformational change for women and girls. This includes:

- Targeted research and dissemination of information.
- Supporting the national and provincial governments and partners when carrying out research.
- Mobilising resources for future research initiatives.

¹⁸ National Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy (GEWD) : EVAWG: Eliminating Violence against women, young women and girls (EVAWG): National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security (WSP).

As can be seen from the above, there is considerable overlap between WRAM's Strategic Objectives and the WISER program's End Of Program Outcomes discussed thus far in this report¹⁹. However, WRAM's Strategic Outcomes 3 and 4 (see above) which cover 'organisational capacity building' and 'engaged research' are *in addition* to the outcomes set out in the WISER program document; and WISER's End of Program Outcome 1 which is to increase the young women's knowledge and skills enabling them to lead gender equity is *additional* to WRAM's strategic objectives.

Overall, the evaluation consultants found these strategic objectives to be coherent and relevant as discussed in this report. The objectives are well selected as key areas to tackle deeply entrenched issues of gender equality in the Solomon Islands. All stakeholders interviewed during the course of this work attested to the relevance of WRAM's work²⁰. One explicitly saying, "It's important that WRAM's work gets funding" [to further gender equity] "I'm worried especially with the geo-political situation affecting support for gender".

The issue is not the choice of strategic objectives but in the planning and delivery given the staffing levels. With initially only four staff members and now six²¹ (one of whom is an accountant), great clarity of thought is needed about where to *concentrate efforts* in order to make the most difference. The workload presented to the staff is enormous – particularly if one considers the additional Strategic Objectives of 'research' and working to 'support and upskill young women leaders to lead on gender equity'. During the course of the evaluation, WRAM staff spoke frequently about the considerable workload pressure and its impact on their health (see staff comments right). Staff members obliquely linked the considerable workload to planning strategically.

Staff comments

"With high expectations, there is high demand. This can lead to burn out"

"we wanted to spend the money, but didn't have the [staff] capacity to do the work"

"we need the skills set to do the work"

"bottlenecks lead to burn out. Self care is important. Staff become sick. "

"how do we do this and have an organisation that is fully resourced to cater for the work?"

Another said, "we have to have a work plan that is more realistic".

Some WRAM objectives were inevitably deprioritised due to COVID restrictions, staff sickness and workload (see section 1.4 above). Strategic Objective 4 to engage in active research has not been possible to implement and, of particular note, is work on organisational strengthening (Strategic Objective 3). Attempts to work on a performance appraisal system were stalled, initially due to funding issues and then due to difficulty recruiting staff to take this forward (plus COVID travel restrictions preventing consultant's involvement). Furthermore, consistent engagement on MEL was not prioritised (see section 3 above)²². As the staff team point out, many of them would like training and support to meet the work expectations. One staff member talked of "being thrown in the deep end". Another commented, "we need the skills set to do this work". Others talked about learning on the job.

¹⁹ WISER End of Program Outcome 2 = Strategic Objective 1. WISER End of Program Outcome 3 = Strategic objective 2.

²⁰ NB. The consultants were unable to talk to WRAM's Board about this strategy. Three separate meetings were cancelled with the evaluation team.

²¹ By 2023 two additional staff members had been employed. These were previously WRAM volunteers.

²² The absence of monitoring against WRAM's Strategic plan delivery has left a gap in data available to this evaluation.

As has been attested by stakeholder feedback in this WISER evaluation, there is work to do on planning strategically. A small organisation needs to be exceptionally strategic in what it does and how it executes what it does. If staff numbers are low, it is important to think carefully about either reducing expectation in the Strategic Plan or planning strategically about working with and through others. As one stakeholder said, “the whole thing is the strategy”. Another said, “at the moment the challenge for WRAM is that they need more people”.

Naturally this is a strategic choice for WRAM’s Board as it moves forward²³. As this evaluation has found, WRAM has positioned itself as a leader in the women’s movement in the Solomon Islands. It is a respected organisation that is seen to be able to achieve change. Key areas of work, particularly those taken forward under the WISER program, have been achieving progress. In particular WRAM’s work with partners on the TSM campaign in the Provinces has been highly successful. As it moves forward, WRAM has three choices:

- a. Reduce WRAM’s strategic expectations and carve out niche areas of work which are doable given staffing levels.
- b. Increase staffing levels to match strategic expectations.
- c. Increase staffing levels and work through and with partner organisations who can take on the work and share responsibilities.

This evaluation found merit in the idea of collective empowerment in working through and with partners while increasing the numbers of WRAM staff slowly²⁴. As one stakeholder commented,

“At the moment WRAM is spread too thinly because they are doing activity work. They shouldn’t do this. They should work with partners who do this work. WRAM should be training others to go out and do the work, not going out themselves”

As explained in section 3 above, WRAM has developed significant skills through the WISER program. Now it has choices to make about how to use those skills as it moves forward. Within the Solomon Islands culture there is a strong emphasis on communal collectivity. There are also many partner organisations within the women’s movement which would appreciate WRAM’s support and engagement. Working through, and with, others will require some upskilling. WRAM has developed a good reputation in advocacy, however there will be new skills required to train others and support partners to lead on work particularly in the Provinces.

²³ NB. The consultants were unable to discuss strategic issue with WRAM’s board due to the unavailability of the Chair of the Board at the time of this evaluation.

²⁴ WRAM is currently recruiting for a Executive Director: a position which would help strategise and strategically plan WRAM’s work.

Section 6: Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

In conclusion, it is important to reflect on WRAM's successes. The WISER program has been carried out in a difficult context: COVID-19 restrictions, illness, delayed funding and geopolitical tensions have all hampered progress. So too has the low staff numbers and the difficulties entailed in working in the Provinces.

All this has not deterred the WRAM team. As one stakeholder said during the course of this evaluation "[the Program Manager] drives her girls to produce". They have certainly produced.

- WRAM has successfully partnered with others – particularly MWYCFA, WDD and the Honiara City Council to achieve change. As a result of this work, all nine Provincial Assemblies have endorsed TSM. This is a significant step forward for the women's movement in the Solomon Islands. The next hurdle is the getting TSM agreed by Parliament.
- The women's movement in the Solomon Islands is in its infancy but it has collectively agreed 43 shared recommendations which are being followed up.
- Young women are more confident and have benefited from WRAM's support and exposure
- The intergenerational collaboration of young women in the broader women's movement is contributing to the sustainability of the Women's Rights Movement.

To build on these successes, there are series of recommendations from the WISER Program.

1) Small Organisations have to be exceptionally strategic and develop skilled program

management to work in different ways. As this evaluation has shown, WISER's ambitious program of work has stretched each staff member. Given WRAM's low staffing levels, it is important to work strategically through and with others. This shift will require thinking strategically about how to carry out the work and potentially new sets of skills about how to support and train others to take on the work. The consultant's Provincial visit (carried out during this evaluation) found that much more could be done to support the Provincial Council of Women (PWC) and 'local champions' to lead TSM advocacy. This work could be carried out in partnership with Solomon Islands Council of Women as well as with current partners. It is important to train trainers and support PCWs, Church Groups and Local Champions to take strong advocacy and awareness raising roles. This will mean training and supporting others to do the work. It will also involve actively engaging with Solomon Islands National Council of Women and strengthening them to take up the challenge.

2) WRAM should develop a coherent plan for nurturing young female future leaders and work

with others to effectively deliver this program. Young women are enthusiastic to take the lead in the women's movement. They are the future. The plan would have clear objectives and ways to engage, raise awareness and 'actively nurture' future leaders. The aim would be to create an active network of young women, supported with communications to ensure that young women feel 'part of a network', part of a movement and individually valued. The development of this active young women's movement would include WRAM's previous linking/inclusion work as well as: a) Supporting WRAM members to lead a program of work to engage with university students; b) Engaging more widely with young women in Church groups and young women's clubs (guides etc); c) Supporting a partner organisation to revitalise the mentoring program which was found to be effective; and d) working with SINCW to extend this work to the Provinces.

3) There is more work to do on strengthening the Women's Movement in the Solomon Islands.

The importance of the women's movement cannot be underestimated. As many pointed out during the course of this evaluation, furthering women's rights can only be achieved through collective action. Ways to strengthen and grow the movement will include plans to strengthen and grow together through supporting some convenor organisations to strengthen their capacity. This will

include investing in the SINCW as a significant partner, without which, the movement can't successfully flourish in the Provinces. It would also include working with a partner (for example the Young Women's Christian Association) to revitalise a young women's mentoring program. Again, this will involve capacity building and support. Support that would be hugely appreciated.

4) Increasingly strengthen WRAM's organisational capacity. There are two immediate ways that WRAM could invest in strengthening its own capacity. These are:

- **Through developing clear TOC/Advocacy plans** A theory of change helps a team think through tactics, opportunities, allies (male and female), opponents and different ways to get things done in Solomon Islands. It is not static or fixed²⁵, but a useful and frequently used document to help a team think of the different opportunities to achieve change. There should be a TOC (or advocacy plan) for the national advocacy work: one for the Provincial TSM work; and one for the work to build the capacity of young women.
- **Through strengthening MEL.** There is an urgent need to support WRAM staff to develop formal processes of periodic review and reflection. MEL frameworks should be developed as tools for reflection and improvement. Monitoring and learning should become live processes to help the team take time to reflect and monitor their work plans/program logic and TOC and answer key questions:
 - Are we doing the right things, at the right time to make the most difference?
 - Are the tactics achieving the results we want?
 - Are the results achieving the longer term outcomes that we aim for?

During the WISER program, the WRAM team have gained contacts, access to networks and developed their advocacy skills. A lot has been achieved, by WRAM, despite the odds. Indeed, WRAM has positioned itself as a leader in the Solomon Islands women's movement. Alongside its partners, WRAM has managed to get TSM endorsed by all nine Solomon Islands Provincial Assemblies. This is not small feat. It is important to maintain these gains and think carefully through the next steps.

This evaluation has shown there are strategic choices to make about how to work with, support and partner with others to strengthen the Solomon Islands movement. It is hoped that this evaluation has provided ideas of how WRAM can build on their successes, partner with others and take their valuable work forward. WRAM has a crucial role to play, not only in furthering women's rights and increasing women's political participation, but also in contributing to Solomon Island development. It is clear that WRAM has the potential to play this role effectively but will need more support and funding to do so.

²⁵ Neither is it program outcomes drawn up in boxes.

Annex 1. Stakeholders Interviewed

	Name	Organisation	Position
In Isabel Province			
	Michael Vasula	Kubolota Community	Chief
	Hon Hugo Manegegu,	Provincial Government Assembly	Assembly Member. Ward #3 Kokota
	Rex Manase	Provincial Government Assembly	Deputy Provincial Secretary
	Sarah Toni	Isabel Provincial Council of Women (IPCW)	President
		Isabel Provincial Council of Women (IPCW)	Treasurer
	Dorothy Bana	Mothers Union (MU) Anglican Church	President
	Loretta Kelimana	Isabel Provincial Government	Women's Desk Officer
	Kubolota Community	Ward 5.	
Western Province			
	Hon Calrick Runimetu	Provincial Government.	Deputy Premier
	Patrick Toiraena	Provincial Government	Provincial Secretary
	Lisi Wong	Western Provincial Government	Women's Desk Officer (WDO),
	Rendy Solomon	Provincial Council of Women	President
	Wilson Evo (Chief) Nelda Dani (Women Rep) Omesau Evopio (Youth Rep) Martin Luther Baeoro (SDA Church Pastor)	Kuzi Community	Community members (Men, Women, Youth Reps)
	Josephine Takena Atuae (Chairwoman)	Nusa Baruku Community	Community members (Men, Women and Youth Rep)
Honiara Stakeholders			
	Janet Tuhaika	Solomon Islands National Council of Women	General Secretary
	Dr Cedric Alependava	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs	Permanent Secretary
	John Misitee	Min of Prov. Govt and Inst. Strengthening	Deputy Secretary

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	Irene Kaumi	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs	Technical Adviser, Women in Leadership
	Janet Oge	Honiara City Council	Women Desk Officer
	Vaela Ngai	Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs	Director Women's Development Division
	Pauline Soaki	Former MWYCFA	Former Director WDD
	Jocelyn Lai	Young Women's Christian Association	General Secretary
	Natash Hivae	Young Women's Parliament Group	Former Chairlady
	Casper Fa'asala	Persons Living with Disability Solomon Islands	Chief Executive
	Indy Honimae Christina Mara Rose Isukane Judy Horoau	West Are'are Rokataniken WARA	
WRAM Staff			
	Pionie Boso	Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)	Program Manager
	Lisa Horiwapu	Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)	Advocacy Partnership and Networking Officer
	Bezel Aonima	Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)	Legal Officer
	Jessica Tekulu	Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)	Project Officer
	Nauna Revo	Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)	Women's Economic Empowerment Officer
	Rex Maesiedi	Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)	Accountant

Annex 2. Outline of Sensemaking Workshop (24th October 2023)

AGENDA

- 9.30 Opening prayer & Introductions**
- 10.00 - 10.45 WISER Evaluation findings & suggestions**
- 10.45 - 11.15 Group work - Initial reactions and questions**
- 11.15 - 11.25 Morning coffee/tea**
- 11.25 - 12.30 Group Work on Key Strategic Questions**
- 12.30 - 1.30 Lunch**
- 1.30 - 2.30 Group work. Next steps for WISER – TSM & Movement building**
- 2.30 – 3.00 Feedback from group work and WRAP UP**