



# Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

## Fiji Country Plan Summary

### Background

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (*Pacific Women*) was announced by the Australian Government at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders' meeting in August 2012. It commits up to \$320 million over 10 years in 14 Pacific Islands Forum member countries. The program aims to improve opportunities for the political, economic and social advancement of Pacific women. *Pacific Women* will support countries to meet the commitments they made in the 2012 Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration. The outcomes sought by Pacific Women are:

- Women, and women's interests, are increasingly and effectively represented and visible through leadership at all levels of decision making.
- Women have expanded economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets.
- Violence against women is reduced and survivors of violence have access to support services and to justice.
- Women in the Pacific will have a stronger sense of their own agency, supported by a changing legal and social environment and through increased access to the services they need.

*Pacific Women* is managed by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and works with a wide range of implementing partners, including the 14 partner governments, multilateral organisations, international and national non-government organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector.

The *Pacific Women* Support Unit provides technical and administrative services to assist in the management of the program, including planning, delivery and monitoring of activities, research and communications. The Support Unit is based in Suva, Fiji, with a sub-office in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

### Fiji

Fiji is a country comprised of over 300 islands and has one of the more developed economies in the Pacific region. As such, it fares well compared to its neighbours, ranking 91 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index.<sup>1</sup> However, the 2017 Global Gender Gap Report ranked Fiji 125 out of 144 countries in terms of the Global Gender Gap Index,<sup>2</sup> which measures

<sup>1</sup> Human Development Index 2017, United Nations Development Programme. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/FJI>

<sup>2</sup> 2017 Global Gender Gap Report, World Economic Forum. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GGGR\\_2017.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf)



gender disparity across four broad areas including: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment and health and survival.

The Government of Fiji is committed to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The Fiji National Gender Policy 2014<sup>3</sup> focuses on the promotion of women's human rights and gender mainstreaming across development planning and decision making processes within government, as well as addressing structural and social barriers that impede gender equality.

## ***Pacific Women Country Plan***

Through *Pacific Women*, the Australian Government will spend approximately **\$26 million over 10 years** (2012–2022) on initiatives supporting women's empowerment in Fiji.

Country Plans are the mechanism through which *Pacific Women* outcomes and activities are planned and agreed between DFAT and counterpart governments, following extensive national consultations. They provide detail on what will be funded and how these funding decisions are made. The first Fiji Country Plan was developed in 2013 based on consultations with women's civil society organisations, Australian Government funded aid programs working in Fiji and development partners. It was updated in 2015 to better reflect the Government of Fiji's and Government of Australia's shared commitment to implement the National Gender Policy (2014) and related gender equality commitments. The Country Plan has an accompanying Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to track progress and learning.

A review of the Fiji Country Plan was conducted in 2017. The review focused on the extent to which women's economic empowerment and women's leadership and decision making activities have contributed to positive change for women in Fiji. Violence against women was not reviewed, as that topic had previously undergone multiple evaluations and continues to be well programmed under the existing Country Plan portfolio.

The second Fiji Country Plan (2018–2021) builds on successes and lessons learned from the first and includes support to increase women's accessibility to safe spaces to practice leadership and build confidence to influence national policy processes. It will continue to create opportunities that contribute to an enabling environment that supports women's participation in community, local and national level leadership. It also supports female market vendors to work together to lead market reform. Vendors are economically and socially empowered by improving infrastructure, systems, relations, safety and services in the markets. The Country Plan also encourages coalitions of women's rights organisations committed to a Pacific where there is gender justice, ecological sustainability, peace, freedom, equality and human rights for all.

In addition to *Pacific Women*, DFAT makes an important contribution to gender equality in Fiji through mainstreaming gender outcomes in the aid program, as well as through political, diplomatic and corporate activities.

## **Rationale for activities in the Country Plan**

Fiji is a multicultural society with varying cultural traditions and values. Strong patriarchal practices dominate decision making structures with little to no participation of women in decision making and formal planning. High rates of violence against women persist and analysis of gender inequality in Fiji highlights the need for a multi-pronged approach to address this complex issue. These approaches include targeted interventions with individuals, families and communities, through to

3 Ministry for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation. (2014) *Fiji National Gender Policy*.



strategies that address formal systems and structures at the national level that discriminate against women.

### **(a) Increasing Women's Leadership and Decision Making**

Despite progress, men still largely dominate the political arena. When women do participate in politics, they tend to do so in small numbers. Differences among women (as among men) on the basis of class, religion, race, ethnicity and age tend to play out in different ways in the representation of women in national level leadership.<sup>4</sup>

### **(b) Increasing economic opportunities for women**

Women's active participation in the economy is critical for economic growth and prosperity. While Fiji's laws accord its men and women citizens the same rights to inheritance,<sup>5</sup> women face discriminatory customary laws and traditions that prohibit inheritance on traditional land titles.<sup>6</sup> Inequitable financial policies and practices further marginalise women in accessing loan schemes and women have limited opportunities to pursue higher paying occupations.<sup>7</sup>

### **(c) Reducing violence against women and expanding support services**

Rates of violence against women and girls in Fiji are among the highest in the world. According to the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre,<sup>8</sup> 64 per cent of women who have ever been in an intimate relationship have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner in their lifetime. Strong and consistent anti-violence advocacy from individuals, women's groups and civil society organisations has helped to develop accessible referral pathways for services for survivors of violence, legislative reform and greater community awareness of ending violence against women.

### **(d) Enhancing women's agency**

Ultimately, the implementation of the Country Plan is intended to strengthen women's organisations, groups and coalitions for change, addressing the structural barriers and recognising enablers of change are essential in building an enabling environment in support of women's agency.

## **The Fiji Women's Fund**

In 2017, the program established the Fiji Women's Fund (the Fund). The Fund<sup>9</sup> provides \$10.5 million from July 2017 to June 2022 to support women's groups, organisations and networks in Fiji to expand and enhance their work on women's empowerment and gender equality in Fiji. One of the goals of the Fund is to transition to an independent local entity with secured resourcing from other donors, private sector and local philanthropy by June 2022. The Fund is co-located with the

<sup>4</sup> Chattier, P. 2015. Women in the House (of Parliament) in Fiji: What's gender got to do with it?

<sup>5</sup> See *Inheritance (Family Provision) Act* 2004, Art. 3 [http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/num\\_act/ipa2004304/](http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/num_act/ipa2004304/) and *Succession, Probate and Administration Act* (revised 1985), Art. 6 [http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/consol\\_act\\_OK/spaaa376/](http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/consol_act_OK/spaaa376/) (accessed 12 April 2018).

<sup>6</sup> See *Property Law Act*, Art. 21(1) [http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/consol\\_act/pla179/](http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/consol_act/pla179/) and *Married Women's Property Act*, Art. 3(1) [http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/consol\\_act/mwpa290/](http://www.pacii.org/fi/legis/consol_act/mwpa290/) (accessed 12 April 2018)

<sup>7</sup> Asian Development Bank. (2006) Country Gender Assessment.

<sup>8</sup> Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, 2003. *Somebody's Life, Everybody's Business!* <http://www.fijiwomen.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/National-Survey-Summary.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> The Fiji Women's Fund is aimed at reaching women living in rural and remote locations and those who are marginalised, including women with disabilities and those facing discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. It contributes to the National Gender Policy, the Beijing Platform for Action, Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration (2012) and the Sustainable Development Goals 2030.





existing Pacific Women Support Unit office in Suva, Fiji, and operates as an independent entity to support grant and capacity building activities of Fiji-based implementing partners.

The Fund is governed by a Steering Committee comprising Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, DFAT, women's civil society and the private sector who provide overall strategic guidance and support to ensure the Fund is making positive progress against its intended outcomes.

**Table 1: Bilateral Activities**

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
<b>Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making</b>		
Support for Women's Weather Watch Preparedness, Participation and Protection campaign (femLINKpacific)	Ensuring disaster preparedness plans, media and information communication systems are gender inclusive. Activities build on femLINKpacific's collaboration with the Fiji National Disaster Management Office which includes development of content for the National Tsunami Preparedness Plan.	\$823,131 (2013–2018)
Enhancing women's participation in decision making through strengthened community radio transmission (femLINKpacific)	Upgraded community radio infrastructure to increase transmission and reach of FemTALK 89FM's radio transmission. Additional funding was provided to femLINKpacific to enable repairs to radio infrastructure as a result of Tropical Cyclone Winston. The funding supported community- and national-level consultations with rural women to increase their awareness and participation in national disaster management response and recovery. Women-led community-based protection mechanisms were piloted in six locations around Fiji.	\$362,131.00 (2013–2017)
<b>Outcome: Economic Empowerment</b>		
Women's Vocational Training Centre (Fiji Muslim Women's League)	Supported targeted training programs for women to enhance economic opportunities. Additional funding was provided to the Fiji Muslim Women's League to enable the distribution of dignity, hygiene and household kits to women in rural and remote areas of Ba and Ra affected by Tropical Cyclone Winston.	\$251,796.00 (2015–2016)
Support to community-based women's organisations (Ra Naari Parishad)	Supporting the establishment of the Ra Naari Centre to enable the organisation to deliver economic livelihood activities.	\$20,000.00 (2015–2016)
Support for women's civil society organisations (Women in Fisheries Network)	Supporting the re-establishment of the Women in Fisheries Network-Fiji to enable a platform for knowledge sharing, collaboration and the exchange of information to strengthen the involvement of and improve the conditions of women in the Fiji fisheries sector.	\$85,000.00 (2015–2016)
Support for women's economic empowerment (South Pacific Academy of Beauty Therapy)	This project aims to improve economic opportunities for women from low socio-economic backgrounds and from rural and remote areas where access to employment is low, through education and training. Since 2014, 61 scholarships have been awarded to women who graduate with a Certificate IV in beauty and spa therapy.	\$916,672 (2014–2020)
Markets for Change (UN Women)	Improving market governance, management, infrastructure and access to financial services to increase women's economic empowerment and ensure markets are more sustainable, accessible and safe for women vendors. Additional funds were provided to enable recovery and response after Tropical Cyclone Winston.	\$10,677,715.00 (2014–2019)



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Feasibility study on increasing women's economic opportunities in Fiji (Consultant)	Completed a participatory scoping study on options for expanding women's economic opportunities across urban and rural areas in Fiji.	\$47,638.00 (2014–2015)
<b>Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</b>		
Fiji Women's Crisis Centre programs to End Violence against Women in Fiji and the Pacific (Fiji Women's Crisis Centre)	Supporting the continuation of core funding to Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, the leading crisis and support service for women and girls in Fiji and the region.	\$7,050,000.00 (2016–2020)
WEAVERS project (Pacific Conference of Churches)	Supported the use of a rights-based theological approach to eliminating violence against women. This project aimed to provide communities with rights-based ecumenical messages to support the prevention of violence against women and link women to crisis services in Fiji.	\$83,000.00 (2016)
Support for women's empowerment through holistic and sustainable service delivery	Provided support to build skills, enhance knowledge and awareness of community members and other local service providers in addressing social issues that impact women's empowerment, well-being and safety.	\$270,000.00 (2015–2016)
Support for sexual and reproductive health services for women and youth (Medical Services Pacific)	Supported targeted programs to the increase access to clinical health care for women and girls, justice and child protection services for vulnerable children and youth. Additional funding was provided to enable Medical Services Pacific to deliver sexual and reproductive health services to rural and remote women in Tropical Cyclone Winston affected communities.	\$988,423.00 (2014–2017)
Support for gender equality through ecumenical-based approaches (House of Sarah)	Supported increased collaboration between church leaders and clergy on advocacy for ending violence against women.	\$131,000.00 (2014–2017)
<b>Outcome: Enhancing Agency</b>		
The Fiji Women's Fund	Supporting local women's groups, organisations and networks in Fiji to expand and enhance their work on women's empowerment and gender equality. A key objective of the Fund is to reach women living in rural and remote locations and those who are marginalised. The Fund is implemented by a team led by a Fund Manager and support staff and has a Steering Committee to provide strategic guidance and advice.	\$10,500,000 (2016–2022)
We Rise Coalition (Partnership between the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, Diverse Voices and Action for Equality; femLINKpacific and International)	Supporting a coalition of four women's rights organisations committed to a Pacific where there is gender justice, ecological sustainability, peace, freedom, equality and human rights for all.	\$2,800,000 (2015–2019)



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET
Women's Development Agency)		
Support to Ministry of Women (Ministry of Women)	Supported the Ministry of Women's implementation of the National Gender Policy and strengthened Monitoring & Evaluation capacity.	\$434,334.00 (2015–2017)
Feasibility study on establishing a women's fund to support women focused organisations in Fiji (Consultant)	Completed a study that built on recommendations of a DFAT commissioned civil society analysis that included a focus on the situation of women focused CSOs in Fiji and how DFAT could best support their work in line with its commitment under <i>Pacific Women</i> .	\$60,612.00 (2015–2016)
Developing a multi-dimensional and gender-sensitive measure of poverty through the Individual Deprivation Measure (International Women's Development Agency, Australian National University, and the Fiji Bureau of Statistics)	Applying the Individual Deprivation Measure tool to measure the gendered aspects of poverty in communities. The provision of gender sensitive data aims to inform national policy and decision makers on programs and services for women and vulnerable groups.	\$346,659.00 (2013–2017)



**Table 2: Regional Programs with activities in Fiji**

PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET <sup>10</sup>
<b>Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making</b>		
Shifting the Power Coalition (ActionAid Australia, femLINKpacific, Pacific Disability Forum, Nazareth Centre, Transcend Oceania, Talitha Project, YWCA PNG, YWCA Samoa, Vanuatu Young Women for Change, Vois Blong Mere, ActionAid Vanuatu)	Working to ensure diverse Pacific women's voices provide leadership in disaster planning and response at all levels in six countries. Expected outcomes are increased capacity to engage in disaster coordination mechanisms and influence decision making; documentation of needs and capacities in crises to contribute to evidence based disaster planning; and establishment of platforms to strengthen diverse Pacific women's voices in regional forums to influence policy and decision making.	\$895,000 (2018–2021)
Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships Project (Australian International and Community Relations Office, Department of the House of Representatives)	Supported building the capacity of Pacific women parliamentarians and their staff to ensure gender equality issues are better addressed in parliament.	\$2,850,037 (2013–2018)
<b>Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</b>		
Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (UN Women)	The program focuses on three essential interventions: formal and informal education; contextualised, community-based prevention approaches and civil society organisations' capacity to engage with national and regional institutions and authorities. These approaches create a comprehensive program to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women and girls across communities and nations while producing promising practices on the prevention of violence against women and girls in the Pacific.	\$7,627,947.80 (2018–2022)
Gender Equality Theology – Institutional Transformation (UnitingWorld)	This program supports institutional transformation within churches and participating organisations by challenging and shifting traditional gender theologies and then reviewing church polices to align them with new gender equality theologies. This is anticipated to lead to establishing procedures including codes of conduct for leaders and members and response mechanisms for situations of violence that respect the rights of women and that promote and act in accordance with the protection laws within each country.	\$1,895,768 (2018–2021)
Support to the Pacific Community Regional	Focusing on supporting work on ending violence against women, human rights and good governance, RRRT works with Pacific island governments and civil society	\$5,750,000 (2015–2020)

<sup>10</sup> This allocation is not for Fiji alone but for multiple countries under *Pacific Women*.



PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET <sup>10</sup>
Rights Resource Team (Pacific Community)	organisations by providing technical assistance, training and advocating for women and girls to have increased access to justice for domestic violence and to promote and protect human rights commitments.	
Partnering Women for Change (UnitingWorld)	Supporting work with churches to ensure that women, girls and people living with disabilities have increased safety and well-being in their homes, communities and churches.	\$370,000 (2015–2018)
UNICEF Pacific Child Protection Program (UNICEF)	Supporting governments in 14 Pacific Island countries to strengthen the protection of children from violence, abuse and exploitation.	\$7,000,000 (2014–2018)
Pacific Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Women)	Supported civil society organisations and governments to prevent violence and provide services for survivors of violence, including for counselling, paralegal aid, shelter and referral services. The Fund also strengthened the capacity of organisations working to end violence against women through training in advocacy, law reform, women's human rights, community education and counselling services.	\$1,500,000 (2014–2017)
<b>Outcome: Enhancing Agency</b>		
Partnerships for Health and Rights: Working for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights for all in the Pacific (International Planned Parenthood Federation)	Supporting the expansion of access to sexual and reproductive health services in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea <sup>11</sup> , Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.	\$3,000,000 (2015–2022)
Last Taboo Research (WaterAid, Burnet Institute and the International Women's Development Agency)	Undertook formative research in three Pacific countries (Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) on barriers to women and girls' effective menstrual management, and potential impacts on their participation in education and income generation.	\$500,000 (2016–2017)
Women's Leadership Research (Developmental Leadership Program, La Trobe University)	Funded the Developmental Leadership Program to undertake research on women's leadership programs at a community level in the Pacific and to assess how working politically and through coalitions can contribute to program outcomes.	\$250,000 (2014–2016)
Gender Equality and Climate Change in the Pacific (The protection and Pacific (ProPa) Network)	The Networks' mandate includes raising awareness of the nexus between gender equality and climate change, and generating more informed decision making in this space to ensure women's voices influence decision making, and that climate agreements implemented in a gender-responsive way in the Pacific.	\$500,000 (2015–2017)

<sup>11</sup> Papua New Guinea included in phase two from 2019-2022





PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER	DESCRIPTION	BUDGET <sup>10</sup>
Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (Pacific Community)	Conduct stocktakes and support for the strengthening of government capacity to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into policies, legislation and programs and improve the collection and analysis of data to better track outcomes.	\$3,941,712 (2013–2018) \$5,494,203 (2019-2023)