Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

Palau 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.

Palau

Palau is a matrilineal society in which women have traditionally held positions of power and respect in a spirit of equality with men. In contemporary society, Palauan women enjoy higher levels of education and better health than men. In public service, women dominate the judiciary and are well represented on public sector boards and commissions. However, they remain under-represented in the national congress, the cabinet and at the top echelon of the civil service. Palau has not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination of all forms against Women.
Pacific Women Country Plan

Through Pacific Women, the Australian Government will spend approximately $1.4 million over 10 years (2012–2022) on initiatives supporting women’s and girl’s empowerment in the Republic of Palau.

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. This is the first Pacific Women Country Plan for Palau and outlines activities for 2015 to 2019. It was developed on the basis of collaboration and consultation with key stakeholders. The Country Plan was designed to complement existing local initiatives that contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community North Pacific Gender Equality Adviser is scoping ways to support women in business. This includes examining Palau’s policy and regulatory environment in relation to the private sector, including workplace policies, identifying gaps and remedial actions.

In 2017, a review of the implementation of the Family Protection Act 2012 was conducted. Technical assistance was provided under the Country Plan and the review was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. It includes a draft implementation plan.

The Country Plan funds a national Gender Analyst role based in the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. The analyst focuses on program development, implementation, research and partnership development in relation to gender statistics, policy and planning.

Pacific Women’s regional funding to the Pacific Community is also supporting a program to introduce gender mainstreaming across all of the Palauan government’s policies and programs. This includes drafting a gender mainstreaming policy and strategy for ratification by congress.

The Palau Country Plan will be continuously improved through monitoring for changes rather than outcomes. The Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, Division of Gender, will oversee management of the Palau Country Plan. The Gender Working Group and Family Protection Act Working Group will be encouraged to hold annual reflection retreats so that members can bring new ideas into the work of the groups.

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

Rationale for activities in the Country Plan

Palauan society follows matrilineal traditions, particularly in relation to funerals, marriages and inheritance of land and titles. Nonetheless, gender equality continues to be a major social, economic and political issue for all citizens of Palau.

The Beijing+20 Report¹ identified a number of other challenges to gender equality in Palau. These include:

- the lack of a single government depository for gender information and a lack of gender disaggregated data across government

low levels of enforcement of existing protective legislation on human trafficking, prostitution, and domestic violence

a dearth of effective protective services including a shelter for women and children

cultural norms and perceptions women should remain in the background

limited capacity within the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs for the Gender Division to deliver on its mandate

impact of climate change on the livelihoods and well-being of women and children

impact of non-communicable diseases on the overall health and well-being of women

lack of a comprehensive Labour Policy.

The Beijing+20 Report also stated that Palauan women perceive inequality in the workplace to be based upon lower overall salaries of women compared to men. Women believe that representation in key decision making positions is dominated by men and this needs to be addressed.

(a) Increasing women’s leadership and decision making

There were no women in parliament before 2008. Since then, women have increasingly been involved in national-level politics and women now represent 14 per cent of parliamentarians. Two women were successful in being elected to the Senate and two to the House of Delegates.

(b) Increasing economic opportunities for women

While Palauan women are active in the economy and own many businesses, they face a number of challenges. At a national economic symposium in 2007, women requested access to capital for entrepreneurship, good education and equality of opportunity, equitable sharing in the benefits of development, and stable and environmentally friendly businesses that create reliable jobs with good income. At the legislative level, there is a need to develop equitable workplace legislation addressing a full range of issues such as parental leave, workplace sexual harassment and equal pay for equal work.

(c) Reducing violence against women and expanding support services

Research reports that one quarter of women in Palau have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime. An integrated approach is required to address violence against women and children that involves both government and civil society. The justice sector, police, health, education and social services need to work hand in hand to support victims, protect those at risk of violence and effectively handle perpetrators. The Family Protection Act 2012 provides a strategic gateway to mobilise stakeholders for maximum coordination, establish referral networks and educate all levels of society on striving for violence free communities. An implementation plan is the next step to achieving these outcomes.

(d) Enhancing women’s agency

The Beijing +20 Report recognised the limited capacity within the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs for the Gender Division to deliver on its mandate. Support is needed for this Ministry to be an effective leader in progressing the country’s gender equality initiatives.

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### Table 1: Bilateral Activities

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>BUDGET</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</strong></td>
<td><strong>Review of the Implementation of the Palau Family Protection Act 2012 (Consultant and Government of Palau)</strong> The Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, supported by a consultant, carried out the review and developed a draft implementation plan.</td>
<td>$21,749 (2017–2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regional support on male advocacy (Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre and Government of Palau)</strong></td>
<td>Supported Palau participants to attend the Regional Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre Training Program.</td>
<td>$18,018 (2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Enhancing Agency</strong></td>
<td><strong>Support for implementation of the Government of Palau’s gender mainstreaming policy and strategy (Gender Division, Ministry of Culture and Community Affairs, Government of Palau)</strong> Providing support to the government through funding for a national Gender Analyst position to be based within the Ministry of Culture and Community Affairs to support the development and implementation of a gender mainstreaming policy.</td>
<td>$91,956 (2017–2019)</td>
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## Table 2: Regional Programs with Activities in Palau

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME AND PARTNER</th>
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<th>BUDGET³</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Leadership and Decision Making</strong></td>
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<td>Adam Minter/ABF: $2,850,037 (2013–2018)</td>
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<td>Pacific Women Parliamentary Partnerships Project (Australian International and Community Relations Office, Department of the House of Representatives)</td>
<td>Supported building the capacity of Pacific women parliamentarians and their staff to ensure gender equality issues are better addressed in parliament.</td>
<td>Adam Minter/ABF: $2,850,037 (2013–2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Economic Empowerment</strong></td>
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<td>Willem Bruijze/ABF: $3,884,100 (2018–2022)</td>
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<td>Building prosperity for women producers, processors and women owned businesses through organic value chains (Pacific Community POETCom)</td>
<td>Identifying and supporting organic value chains that benefit women as producers, suppliers, processors and entrepreneurs, while also enhancing their capacity for inter-regional organic trade within the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Kiribati.</td>
<td>Willem Bruijze/ABF: $3,884,100 (2018–2022)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome: Ending Violence against Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Willem Bruijze/ABF: $5,750,000 (2015–2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support to the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team (Pacific Community)</td>
<td>Focusing on supporting work on ending violence against women, human rights and good governance, RRRT works with Pacific island governments and civil society 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.</td>
<td>Willem Bruijze/ABF: $5,750,000 (2015–2020)</td>
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<td>Gender Adviser for the North Pacific (Pacific Community)</td>
<td>The Adviser supports the work of SPC’s Gender, Culture and Youth Programme, and through DFAT's Post in Pohnpei, supports the implementation and monitoring of Pacific Women activities in the North Pacific.</td>
<td>Willem Bruijze/ABF: $391,740 (2015–2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progressing Gender Equality in the Pacific (Pacific Community)</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Willem Bruijze/ABF: $3,941,712 (2013–2018)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Willem Bruijze/ABF: $5,494,203 (2019-2023)</td>
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³ This allocation is not for Palau alone but for multiple countries under Pacific Women.