Bougainville Women’s Federation: Young Women’s Leadership Project (YWLP) success, lesson learnt, challenges & recommendations-2016-2018
Young Women’s Leadership Project

- **Ran by young women for young women** with implementation support from BWF in partnership with IWDA and supported by the Australian Government in partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea as part of the Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program.

- **Addressed the needs and ambitions of young women in Bougainville**.

- 36 month project, running from 2016 to 2018 and implemented in five Districts in Bougainville
- Built off research conducted in 2014 by BWF and ANU, outlining barriers to young women’s leadership and participation in Bougainville

- **Project activities were designed to**:
  - build the skills of individual young women
  - providing support to BWF in which young women could be nurtured as future leaders,
  - practice their political and leadership skills
  - build solidarity with other women
  - change gender norms and practices that held young women back.
YWLP Objectives

1. Young women will have stronger leadership skills and confidence, and a greater voice in local and regional government affairs and policy development.

2. The Bougainville Women’s Federation (BWF) is strengthened as a sustainable, inclusive representative body for women across Bougainville.
YWLP Successes

- YW taking up leadership positions and seeing themselves as leaders
- YW across five districts have valued the project and increased confidence and knowledge leadership and community engagement
- YW able to speak out and organize with other young women to advocate on their needs
- YW associations have been set up in the districts and are self-sustaining through fundraising and membership fees
- Increased access to resources
- YW representative in BWF structure
- Community perceptions of young women’s ability to lead and contribute to their communities changing

“Before the project I used to hide behind others and push others forward. I lacked confidence. Mentoring I received and participation in events gave me the courage I needed to come out of hiding and last year I was able to stand up and speak out in front of the community. The community saw how much I’d changed and asked me to run in the community government elections. I came second. Next time I will run again.”

Young woman participant, North Bougainville.

- YW leading change- 2019 training roll out and fundraising plans with other young women
- Long serving mature women leaders are recognising and supporting YW leadership
- *Gud Lidasip* training is recognised as an effective approach to empower young women, and young women alumni/trainers are recognised for their expertise.
Successes continued...

- Project outcomes likely to be sustainable beyond the life of the project.
- **YW trainers have provided training to national partners**
- YW spot light profile distributed to other NGO, community government and Government departments.
- YW video played on bill board screen in Buka
- Mentoring programs helpful-passing down of skills
- **YW establishing and managing small businesses.**
- Active male champions have been very supportive

Speaking for her group in Buin, one young women leader said: “We now see ourselves as somebody in the community – we learned that we have the right to speak, and we have the confidence to speak out and to older women.

One YW in Kieta, recently elected to the role of treasurer in her youth group, said “I never saw myself as a leader, like the women in the BWF, but now I can be like those leaders. I have the spirit of a leader”
Findings from the recent final evaluation showed YW reported their skills had increased after participating in YWLP.
**Key Achievements in numbers:**

- 598 YW participated in 30 trainings across 5 districts
- 37 YW took up new, formal leadership positions through their participation in YWLP
- 17 YW underwent Gud Disison Gud Lidasip ToT
- YW delivered 5 Gud Disison Gud Lidasip trainings to partners
- 96 Young men participated in Male Advocate training
- YW started 16 small business including livelihood projects
- 5 YW district associations formed
- 2 YW leadership forums with 329 YW participating
Challenges

➢ Communication and transport
➢ Lack of support and engagement from some women, District Women’s Federations and community leaders
➢ Stealing from fresh produce gardens (livelihood projects) by some community members.
➢ YW in rural areas lacked support sometimes due to communication challenges
➢ High turnover of YW in project
➢ Projects limited effective collaboration with Government
➢ Lack of funding for start-up small businesses, other trainings, more community outreach and awareness activities
➢ Resistance from few families, male partners and others in the community.
Lessons Learnt

❖ More successful participants have been involved in other BWF projects showing need for long term engagement

❖ Support from others - parents and male partners, community leaders, and women leaders (both within and outside BWF) - was a key enabling factor for YW to use new knowledge and leadership skill

❖ More support needed for remotely based YW

❖ Important to engage men in projects

❖ More awareness of project and support for attitude change for DWF’s, community Leaders and communities.

❖ Most women leaders had not access the same capacity building and level of education as yw

❖ YWLP provide more spaces for yw to demonstrate the leadership skills gained from trainings.

❖ Important to have YW representatives in organisation formal structures

❖ Increased support for organisational operations and sustainability to continue to support YWL programming

❖ Women leaders need to be invited to observe trainings for yw so that they are aware of the skills yw are developing and not threaten by ideas yw brought.

❖ YWLP to provide more start-up cash for small business

❖ Effective Joint planning between project team facilitated greater synergies between YWLP and BWF other project focused on women’s leadership.

❖ More engagement and collaboration with Government

❖ YW’s economic empowerment is a platform for other kinds of leadership

❖ Need to support YW practical and strategic needs

❖ More support for self-esteem of YW in project

❖ YW Visible activities such livelihood projects are effective way of earning suspect and support of family members, women leaders and community.
Recommendations

- Expand YWLP to all other district of Bougainville and PNG- noted spotlight success of the project.
- Gud Disisons, Gud Lidasip training should be trialed in other provinces of PNG, using BWF young women trainers.
- YW leadership programming should be implemented comprehensively including creating a more enabling environment by working with community leaders, men and boys and families of YW, promoting gender equality, human rights, sexual and reproductive health and economic empowerment with a Do No Harm approach.
- BWF Executive Committee and management to take ownership of the program and market it to funders.
- Government, donors, and civil society organisations, should support the continued development of young women by giving space for young women to represent their own issues and needs.
- BWF continue nurturing the next generation of leaders, by continuing to include young women in all activities and high level decision making.
- Improve communication and collaboration at district level between YWAs and DWFs, and between national BWF level and district and community levels
- Integrate YWAs with the government structure by registering them with District Youth Associations.
- BWF to Continue to showcase the achievements of YWLs within BWF, particularly at district level, and foster a closer and more positive working relationship between DWF and YWAs.
YWLP Resources

Booklet: Hear Our Voice! Stories of Young Women Leaders in Bougainville

Video: Be the Change
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nThcR_KVa2Q

Thank you!

2017 YWL Forum, Buka, Bougainville

2018 YWL Forum, Arawa, Bougainville