



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

Inception Small Islands States (Federated
States of Micronesia, Niue, Tuvalu and
Palau) Plan

April 2014

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development: Small Islands States Country Plan Summaries

Background

Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development (Pacific Women) was launched by the Australian Government at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting in August 2012. *Pacific Women* is a ten-year, \$320 million program, funded through Australian aid, which aims to improve the political, economic and social opportunities of Pacific women. *Pacific Women* will support countries to meet the commitments they made in the *Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declarations*. *Pacific Women* will work with all 14 Pacific Island Forum countries.

After 10 years, it is expected that *Pacific Women* will have helped to:

- > **Increase the effective representation of women, and women's interests, through leadership at all levels of decision-making.**
- > **Expand women's economic opportunities to earn an income and accumulate economic assets.**
- > **Reduce violence against women and increase access to support services and to justice for survivors of violence.**

An important element of *Pacific Women* is delivering of support through individual country plans for the 14 Pacific Island Forum countries. These country plans provide the detail on what will be funded and how these funding decisions are made. Country plans represent locally relevant responses and align with country-specific gender policies and priorities.

Introduction

The Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Tuvalu and Palau are diverse Pacific Small Island States, however, they face many similar development challenges such as: small and widely dispersed populations; small economies; vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change; rapid population growth and gaps in critical infrastructure and service delivery, all of which impact on people's quality of life and livelihoods, and on a country's ability to progress toward sustainable development.

The Australian Government has bilateral aid programs in the Federated States of Micronesia, Tuvalu and Palau, which are guided by Partnerships for Development and a Joint Commitment for Development between Australia, New Zealand and Niue. Australian development assistance in these States aims to improve education outcomes, build economies, improve services for the

community (particularly education, healthcare, and utilities such as power and water), provide technical and policy support to enable each country to pursue their development priorities and increase resilience to the impacts of climate change. Australia partners with the United Nations, development banks, and other bilateral donors, including New Zealand, to deliver its aid program in Small Island States.

Progress towards greater gender equality and the empowerment of women amongst Pacific countries has been strongest in the health and education sectors. However, it is in the area of women's participation in national and local government, violence against women and women's economic empowerment where the Pacific performs most poorly overall.

In response to chronic gender inequalities, the Pacific Leaders *Gender Equality Declaration* was adopted in 2012. At this time, all leaders acknowledged that gender inequality is imposing high personal, social and economic costs on Pacific people and nations, and that improved gender equality will make a significant contribution to creating a prosperous, stable and secure Pacific for current and future generations.

Development of Country Plans under Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development

Country plans should, where possible, align with partner government gender policies and priorities. The Initiative will focus on improving the voice of women in demanding better governance at the political and administrative level, and will support coalitions of women to advocate for this change.

Initial support to the Federated States of Micronesia, Niue, Tuvalu and Palau will be channeled through collaboration with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), which will undertake gender mainstreaming stocktake assessments in each country. In parallel, the Australian Government will work with governments and civil society organisations in each country to identify immediate and medium-term priority activities that can be supported through existing or new regional, multi-country or bilateral programs.

Gender stocktakes and capacity assessments

The purpose of gender mainstreaming is to promote good governance and sustainable development through the integration of gender analysis at all levels of government. This entails the consideration and inclusion of gender perspectives in all government policy making, programming and budgeting to ensure that a clear picture exists of the differing needs, experiences and perspectives of women and men. It also involves properly and equally addressing those differences, and supporting women, in particular in areas where they have traditionally been marginalised

The need to improve gender mainstreaming capacity in the governments of Pacific Island Countries and Territories was identified during the 10th Triennial Meeting of Pacific Women in 2007. In 2009 SPC launched a program to support and build the capacity of Pacific Governments to mainstream gender equality. The Australian Government is funding SPC to continue and expand this program.

The program will investigate the capacity of Pacific governments to address gender inequality through national and sectoral policies, strategies and programming. SPC will also work with national governments to strengthen the collection of gender statistics, which will further inform policy and programming. Through this process, more accurate evidence about gender equality issues and women's contributions to social and economic development in Pacific Island Countries will be generated. It will be made available to governments, civil society and development partners for monitoring the progress towards gender equality, ensuring governments can adequately uphold their reporting requirements under international processes such as the Millennium Development Goal's and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Support to Small Islands States through regional activities

Australian aid is supporting many of the Pacific Small Island States on gender equality programs, including those listed below.

1. The Parliamentary Partnership Program

The Pacific Women's Parliamentary Partnerships Program was the first activity to be implemented under *Pacific Women*. This five-year, \$2.8 million program aims to build the technical capacity of female members of parliament and develop an understanding of the factors that contribute to their success in achieving political office, and the support they require once elected.

The program includes activities such as exchange programs, women's empowerment forums, parliamentary skills scholarships, research support, support to establish gender-sensitive parliaments and support for young female leaders.

2. UNFPA Prevalence studies

Separate to *Pacific Women*, Australia provides support to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to conduct Family Health and Safety Studies, which aim to gather evidence on the prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional violence used against women by intimate partners in the Pacific. The study, which uses the internationally recognised World Health Organisation (WHO) methodology, will be implemented in the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Nauru. This research will be an important contribution to regional and global analysis and trends, and will inform future programming and response efforts through *Pacific Women*. The prevalence studies will be completed at the end of 2014.