



TONGA COUNTRY PROGRAM

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) is a regional initiative of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade that recognises the pivotal role of leadership in development. PLP builds, applies and shares knowledge on developmental leadership (i.e. individuals, organisations and other stakeholders working together on inclusive policy and institutional change for the public good).

PLP's work is structured around the following results streams:

- *Results Stream 1:* Building a body of knowledge on developmental leadership in the Pacific;
- *Results Stream 2:* Supporting collective action by Pacific Island leaders;
- *Results Stream 3:* Enabling and achieving policy and institutional change;
- *Results Stream 4:* Delivering high quality and influential communication to inform policy and practice.

PLP commenced in 2008 and is in Phase 3. Guided by an Advisory Panel of influential Pacific Islanders, PLP works at the regional level, including with regional organisations; and nationally and sub-nationally in Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

HOW WE WORK

PLP works with influential individuals and organisations as they work to pursue an identified policy reform or behaviour change. We recognise that exercising developmental leadership can be complex and unpredictable, and provide flexible support tailored to the specific needs of each partner.

This includes: funding, mentoring, capacity development, research, monitoring and evaluation, training (including on adaptive leadership), networking and information sharing.

Developmental change and reform coalitions

PLP views coalitions as a strong mechanism for overcoming the deeply entrenched and complex problems that define most development challenges. Coalitions are groupings of individuals and/or organisations working together on a common development problem. Coalition members bring different capabilities, resources, and social and political capital to the coalition, contributing to the achievement of shared objectives.

PLP also facilitates and supports collective action by bringing stakeholders together to share information and resources, and linking groups of people working together (i.e. coalitions) to other reform initiatives occurring nationally, regionally and internationally.

OUR WORK

PLP works through robust relationships with government and non-government stakeholders in Tonga. We support our stakeholders to develop and implement their own leadership initiatives, and facilitate participation in broader, cross-sectoral coalitions for development change. PLP identifies opportunities to support developmental leadership in Tonga across these priority areas:

- Women's leadership
- Community leadership
- Future developmental leadership
- Private sector leadership

PRIVATE SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industries

PLP supports the Tonga Chamber of Commerce and Industries to provide the private sector voice for policy making and reforms in Tonga. The Chamber has been influential in shaping the Tongan Government's recent decisions on price control regulations and was also part of the government's negotiations for the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus. In May 2017, the Chamber established a youth entrepreneurs' council in partnership with government and youth stakeholders.

True Tonga Inc is a non-profit organisation that receives support from PLP for its overarching goals of economic empowerment of Tongan craftspeople and cultural preservation of Tonga's handicrafts. True Tonga Inc's advocacy has recently led to a government commitment to include handicrafts in the Buy Tonga Made Policy. A national handicraft standard of authentication under this policy will protect the livelihood of Tongan craftspeople and artisans. Handicrafts are a valuable resource stream for Tongan women and families, with handicraft producers accounting for approximately 26 per cent of the active working population, of which 97 per cent are women.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Civil Society Forum of Tonga

The Civil Society Forum of Tonga represents civil society interests in national policy-making processes. With PLP support, the Forum has organised its members into broad coalitions to collaborate with and inform government on issues including environment, disability inclusion and women. In 2017, the Civil Society Forum of Tonga was also part of the government's monitoring and evaluation team to measure Tonga's progress against its Strategic Development Plan. This is a positive sign of the government's commitment to working with non-state actors on national policy planning and monitoring.

Tonga National Leadership Development Forum

The Tonga National Leadership Development Forum (TNLDF) is a coalition of eminent leaders committed to addressing leadership challenges in Tonga. PLP support enabled the TNLDF to develop a National Leadership Code that has been signed by 20,000 people, including the King, Crown Prince, Prime Minister and members of Cabinet. TNLDF is also spearheading progress on green growth in Tonga.

TNLDF and other government and civil society partners hosted Tonga's first Green Growth Dialogue in *Nuku'alofa* in November 2016. The outcomes are captured in the *Nuku'alofa Declaration on Blue-Green Agenda – the Preferred Pathway to Sustainable Development* and have been approved by the Tongan Cabinet. The recommendations from the declaration will now be implemented by TNLDF and their partners through a technical working committee on green growth.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Civil Society Forum of Tonga coalition

PLP supports two Civil Society Forum of Tonga-convened reform coalitions working to address gender equality issues in Tonga.

The Women in Leadership coalition provides training and post-election support for women candidates and elected officers in Tonga. It had an important role in training the record number of women who contested seats in the 2016 local government elections. The coalition also developed an inclusive *Roadmap to Increasing Women's Participation in Politics* advocating temporary special measures for reserved seats, following broad consultations with the women's movement in Tonga. It has been presented to the Prime Minister and submitted to Parliament by the only woman Member of Parliament, the Honourable Akosita Lavulavu.

The second Civil Society Forum of Tonga coalition is focused on women's economic empowerment. The Forum has recently completed research on women's access to finance in Tonga, examining differences in interest rates and conditions between different lending institutions. The coalition will now make recommendations to government on better support for women-led small and medium sized enterprises.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Tonga National Youth Congress

The Tonga National Youth Congress is the national representative body for youth organisations and interests. PLP supports the Congress in its advocacy and to develop practical responses to youth development challenges. The Tonga National Youth Congress has been instrumental in reviving the Tonga Organic Association to support farmers operating small-medium enterprises and help address youth unemployment. It has also been working to empower Tonga's Namoa (young traditional leaders) with a greater capacity to engage with their communities through involvement in community development projects.

For further information on PLP's Tonga Country Program email: PLP@cardno.com