



WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

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:

- Building a body of knowledge on developmental leadership in the Pacific;
- Supporting collective action by Pacific island leaders;
- Enabling and achieving policy and institutional change;
- Delivering high quality and influential communication to inform policy and practice.

PLP commenced in 2008 and is in Phase 3. An Advisory Panel of influential Pacific islanders guides the program. 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's six priority areas closely align with Australia's aid policy in the Pacific, including on promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. PLP prioritises women's leadership through support to coalitions of Pacific women to increase women's access to decision making and improve women's economic empowerment. The following examples demonstrate how PLP works at the regional, national and sub-national level on the issue of women's leadership.

SAMOA

Supporting Women's Leadership & Political Participation

PLP supports the Samoa National Leadership Development Forum (SNLDF) and the Women in Leadership Advocacy (WinLA) network of women parliamentarians, chief executive officers and public service commissioners to address issues facing women leaders in Samoa. Samoa's general election in 2016 gave both coalitions an opportunity to highlight barriers to women's political participation. A PLP and SNLDF report found that: traditional development assistance (e.g. candidate training) doesn't increase women's representation; women voters must be encouraged to support women candidates; a broad-based campaign is important; and, it helps if women candidates have long-term involvement in cultural and political institutions (e.g. as *matai* in village councils). A WinLA workshop, *Paving the Way for Future Women Members of Parliament*, discussed the findings of the SNLDF report in February 2017. Stakeholders at the workshop, including the Office of the Electoral Commission, UNDP and UN Women, are committed to developing initiatives and partnerships to support women candidates in the 2021 election.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

Empowering Women in Remote Communities

Simbo for Change is a PLP-funded partnership focused on women's economic empowerment and community leadership. The partners include the project founder (a local development entrepreneur), the Madegugusu Women's Association, the Samoan Women in Business Development Inc and PLP. The partnership has helped Simbo to become the first organically certified island in the Solomon Islands. Organic certification now opens the way for the creation of niche agricultural products and the development of organic tourism projects. This will complement other income-generating activities already underway, such as bee-keeping and the extension of traditional weaving practices. It will also contribute funds to the women's new savings clubs and build the confidence and skills of women in Simbo communities.

TONGA

Supporting Reform Coalitions to Empower Tongan Women

PLP supports two Civil Society Forum of Tonga (CSFT)-convened reform coalitions that address gender equality in Tonga. The Women in Leadership coalition provides training and post-election support for women candidates and elected officers. It had an important role in training women to contest seats in the 2016 local government elections. The coalition also developed a *Roadmap to Increase Women's Participation in Politics* to advocate for temporary special measures for reserved seats, following broad consultations with the women's movement. The blueprint has been submitted to Parliament by the Honourable Akosita Lavulavu, the sole woman Member of Parliament.

The second CSFT coalition is focused on women's economic empowerment. CSFT research on women's access to finance in Tonga has uncovered significant differences in interest rates and conditions between different lending institutions. The coalition will make recommendations to government on better support for women-led small and medium sized enterprises.

VANUATU

Increasing Women's Representation in Political Leadership

PLP supports the Women in Shared Decision-Making (WISDM) coalition, led by the Vanuatu Department for Women's Affairs (DWA), to increase women's representation in political leadership and decision making. The WISDM coalition played a key role in securing amendments to the *Decentralisation and Municipalities Act (2013)* to include reserved seats for women in municipal councils. Eleven women have now been elected to councils in Port Vila and Luganville. The WISDM coalition supports them through training and an annual exchange program.

The WISDM coalition is also determined to increase women's political participation at other levels of government. In March 2017, WISDM and DWA provided training to women candidates contesting the provincial government elections. Eleven women candidates stood for election and one was successful. WISDM will continue to promote women's engagement in provincial development and lobby Members of Parliament to support reserved seats for women at provincial and national levels.

REGIONAL

Adaptive Leadership Support for Women Stakeholders in the Region

PLP works in partnership with the Australian Government-funded Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development program to deliver adaptive leadership training for women leaders and advocates from government, inter-government agencies, the private sector and civil society. This training has equipped participants to work more strategically and collaboratively to advocate for gender equality and women's human rights.

For further information on PLP email: PLP@cardno.com