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**EVALUATION REPORT**



**UDF-RAP-07-171 – Strengthening women’s participation in municipal  
government in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands,  
Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu**

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## I. Executive Summary

### *i. Project Data*

The project *Strengthening women's empowerment in municipal government* was originally designed to "advance the role of municipal local governments in achieving gender equality in Fiji by working to deepen women's political representation and participation at this level". However a number of significant challenges – floods in January 2009, political instability, the termination of elected councillors, a series of decrees limiting political parties, media activities and meetings, and the suspension of Fiji from the Commonwealth in April 2009 -- led to a redesign of the project.

Although its overall objective remained essentially unchanged, the focus shifted from elected representatives at municipal level to women working at management and service-delivery levels in local government. The project also moved to become regional, involving women in local government across the Pacific Islands, when the major implementing partner, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), was instructed to disengage from activities in Fiji. The grantee, the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), based in Melbourne, Australia, provided gender expertise to the project and maintained oversight and reporting responsibilities.

The project included gender awareness training, Training of Trainers (ToT) for women working in local government, the creation of a Women in Local Government network and website, multimedia outreach to the community to promote understanding of local government and the crucial role women play in service delivery, and a research and publication component.

The modifications to the project, including a revised workplan and budget, were accepted by UNDEF in May 2010, with a six-month extension. The project therefore ran from October 2008 to April 2011 with a total project cost of USD275,000.

### *ii. Evaluation questions*

Evaluation questions relating to **relevance** focused on the redesign of the project and the rationale for engaging with women at local government level and working at regional level. Although these decisions were effectively forced on the project partners by the political climate and the inability of CLGF to work on a national project in Fiji, it is clear from the statements of those interviewed that it is in fact the local government approach and the regional nature of the project that are its major strengths.

Other questions relating to the relevance of the project focused on the involvement of men, considered crucial if women's empowerment is to lead to real change in both workplace and social relationships and hierarchies, and the introduction of gender issues into the work of CLGF, which had not previously worked in this field. Men did participate in the project at a number of levels: as trainees and research respondents, and there was a targeted awareness-raising course for the predominantly male Special Administrators and Chief Executive Officers appointed to replace elected mayors.

Questions also focused on the relationships among the different components of the project – training, network creation, multimedia outreach, publications and other products – and the extent to which they were logically connected and necessary to the overall project outcomes. Finally, the nature of the partnerships and more specifically whether their individual strengths and weaknesses were taken into account in implementation was explored. It was found that

indeed each partner worked to its strengths and that, additionally, there was considerable capacity building among the partners.

The project did not achieve all its aims, and the evaluation sought to ascertain why this was so and whether the components of the project that were not completed undermined the impact or outcomes of the project reducing the project **effectiveness**. It was found that the project was probably over-ambitious but that all the essential outputs and outcomes were achieved. Additionally, some outputs that were not completed will be followed up as part of CLGF's work, given that one unanticipated outcome of the project was that CLGF has now integrated gender and local government into its core regional programme.

There was considerable over-spend on the project (approximately FJD30,000 from CLGF's general funds), partly because of the delay in start-up, partly because of the devaluation of the Fiji Dollar and also because regional costs were higher than anticipated, impacting on project **efficiency**.

The evaluation explored also the nature of the relationship between IWDA, the grantee, and CLGF, the implementing partner, given that IWDA is based in Australia. All those interviewed emphasized that the partnership was efficient and complementary. Other partners were also satisfied with their role in the project and the nature of the relationships, except for UNWOMEN which, it transpired, had made an early decision not to get involved in the project for reasons that were never shared with the two main partners.

All of the respondents responded favourably to questions relating to the **impact** of the project on them personally and on their work. The women in Fiji remained in fear that their engagement with the project might not be viewed favourably, and were no longer engaged, although they much regretted this. Women in the other Pacific countries have been active since the project ended and, with funding from CLGF, continue to run workshops, give briefings, recommend policy and procedural change in their workplaces and participate in the network.

An unanticipated impact was the integration of the issues of gender and local government into both CLGF's regional work and the work of the Pacific Island Forum. This is also important for the **sustainability** of the project results.

A number of project outputs and outcomes live on after the end of the project. Women in the network as well as project partners continue to organize follow-up training, using the materials produced and the support of CLGF and the network. The network and website are still active, although the challenge now is to expand the network and maintain it. Multimedia products are still in use and are being added to.

**UNDEF funding represented an added value** as a number of respondents believe that the project has created an important new framework for the promotion of gender in local government and opens doors for UNDEF to work in this area across the region. The project fits clearly into UNDEF's mandate to focus on democratization.

### ***iii. Conclusions***

In relation to the relevance of the project, a number of strengths were identified that are worthy of consideration as good practice:

- The move from a national project to a regional initiative not only multiplied the impact of the project but allowed it to be **integrated into the regional agendas** of major inter-governmental players active in the Pacific, in particular the CLGF and the Pacific Islands Forum.

- The focus on women in local government, rather than elected representatives, is innovative and is considered to provide a **better entry point for change**.

- The multimedia campaign was a clever adjunct to the project, delivering **outreach at community level** and promoting positive attitudinal change in relation both to local government and the crucial role women in local government play in service delivery.

- Intelligent **allocation of roles and responsibilities to the partners**, in particular between IWDA and CLGF, resulted in smooth activity that effectively used the strengths of each partner.

- There were also some weaknesses, in particular the fact that the project was **over-ambitious** and therefore not all activities could be completed. This might have been mitigated with better consultation among the partners at project design stage and a less theoretical approach to project design.

- The **research component of the project was weak** and consequently not completed. In fact, it may be that this component was not particularly necessary and the project functioned perfectly well without it.

- The women interviewed told of significant impact of the **training and membership of the network on them** individually and as workers, explaining how they have integrated what they learned (and continue to learn through the network) into their daily work.

- Of concern, however, is the fact that some of the women in Fiji are **self-censoring through fear of repercussions** and have withdrawn from the network. This should be addressed.

With regards to sustainability, the **mainstreaming of the issue of gender and local government** into the CLGF's regional plan and the Pacific Island Forum's regional activities is crucial.

- At an individual level, women across the Pacific provided examples of **follow-up training, briefings and actions** they are taking regularly to promote understanding of the role of women in local government.

For note by UNDEF: several respondents noted that the focus on women in local government provides UNDEF with an **innovative framework for achieving its mandate**. UNDEF has a role to play in the Pacific region, particularly since the region is under-funded with few donors present. **Governance and leadership are key areas for actions in this region**.

#### ***iv. Recommendations***

##### **For IWDA and CLGF**

- It is vital to develop a risk assessment and a risk management plan for all projects at design stage. In particular, when working in the Pacific Islands, always consider: (i) the potential for natural disaster; (ii) political change, instability or hurdles; (iii) the inability of any of the partners to continue in the project; and (iv) restricted or no access to the intended participants.

- Consult with in-country partners at project design stage and conduct a stakeholder analysis to gauge the capacity of each partner to implement components of a project by deadline, within budget and according to their strengths.

- Focus on the essential components of the project and strip away any that do not directly contribute to achieving the intended outcomes.

#### **For CLGF**

- Do not proceed with producing the poster in its current form since the messages are not clear and it is unlikely to have the desired effect of encouraging membership of the network.

- Consider: (i) ongoing advocacy directly with Special Administrators and CEOs and at ministerial level to promote the value of the network in service delivery and community support; (ii) to address the problem of self-censorship among the women in Fiji specifically, ensure that they have up-to-date information on the status of ministerial obstacles that were erected but have now been removed; (iii) to address sensitivities among political and administrative leaders who fear that 'women in local government' may be lightly disguised political or union activism, consider changing the name of the network and more especially the website (and URL) to something more neutral, perhaps using the currently used phrase 'Space on the mat'.

#### **For UNDEF**

- Share this evaluation report with the Australian and New Zealand Governments so that they might learn directly about the project and its outcomes.

- Consider introducing a section in the application form for grants that requires all candidates to outline steps they have taken to assess risk (political, financial, social, organizational) and how they will manage it.

- Consider how support might be given to organizations in less developed countries who may wish to develop projects and apply for funding, perhaps by enlisting the cooperation of UN agencies in-country or the regional commissions.

## II. Introduction and development context

### *i. The project and Evaluation objectives*

The project *Strengthening women's empowerment in municipal government* as originally designed aimed to "advance the role of municipal local governments in achieving gender equality in Fiji by working to deepen women's political representation and participation at this level". The focus of the initiative would be: raising awareness at the community and local political levels; integrating a gender perspective into political party and local government policies, processes and service-delivery activities; strengthening support networks for women candidates and councillors; and strengthening strategic partnerships more broadly for supporting women's political representation and participation.

Severe floods in January 2009 diverted partners' and target groups' attention to disaster relief and delayed start-up of the project. Then a number of events conspired to prompt a total re-think of the project: on 31 January 2009, the interim government of Fiji moved to terminate all elected local government councillors and mayors, installing Special Administrators or Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) to manage local councils for an unspecified period. On 10 April 2009, the government abrogated the 1997 Fiji Constitution. This and the delay in calling national elections led to the Commonwealth suspending relations with Fiji except for emergency purposes.

These political events and their repercussions had two major impacts on project plans:

- The removal of elected councillors not only meant that the primary target group (elected councillors and potential future representatives) effectively no longer existed, but also resulted in political parties hibernating and the political aspirations of both women and men being suppressed;
- The suspension of Fiji from the Commonwealth meant that the implementing partner, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) was instructed by headquarters to cease operations in Fiji.

Consultation between the grantee, the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), based in Melbourne, Australia, and the CLGF resulted in a redesigned project whose focus and operational scope had changed to respond to the challenges outlined, but whose fundamental objectives remained unchanged:

- The focus shifted away from elected representatives at municipal level to focus instead on women working at management and service-delivery levels in local government. The aim was not only to empower these women and promote understanding of their rights as both women and workers, but also to foster understanding at community level of the vital role women and indeed local government in general play in delivering services to local populations;
- The project moved to become regional, involving women in local government across the Pacific Islands, thus allowing CLGF to continue to be the implementing partner while also allowing women in local government in Fiji to participate. In tandem with this, local Fiji partners where possible shifted project activity to their regional arms (for example, femLINK Pacific was engaged in place of femLINK Fiji).

The modifications to the project, including a revised workplan and budget, were accepted by UNDEF in May 2010, along with a six-month extension. The project therefore ran from October 2008 to April 2011 with a total project cost of USD275,000.

This report contains an evaluation of the project as it was implemented, not as it was originally designed, although questions were asked on differences noted in project approach where these seemed appropriate. The aims of the project, outputs and outcomes discussed

in this report therefore relate to the redesigned project and differ from those contained in the Project Document.

## **ii. Evaluation methodology**

An international expert designated to lead the evaluation prepared a preliminary planning note (Launch Note) in August 2011 based on a review of project documentation (see Annex 2: documents reviewed), and an evaluation questionnaire (see Annex 5) which would serve as a guide to interviews, focus group meetings and email exchanges. A number of questionnaires derived from this master were subsequently prepared to tailor to the different respondent categories (participants, local partners, UN agency respondents etc.).

The international evaluator interviewed members of the grantee's project team in Melbourne and corresponded with the organization's former Programme Director by email. With the help of a local expert and CLGF, the international expert then conducted interviews and one focus group meeting in Suva, Fiji, for one week from 29 August to 2 September 2011. After the first day of interviews, it became clear that project participants in Fiji were reluctant to discuss project activities in the presence of a local evaluator, given the sensitive political situation prevailing. The international expert therefore conducted all subsequent meetings alone, except for those with UN agencies. Fiji-based women's names have been excluded from the list of interviewees (Annex 3) in view of concerns of the participants that their participation might lead to repercussions in their workplace.

Before leaving for Fiji, the international evaluator sent questions by email to the project participants in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and municipalities in Fiji outside Suva. These were subsequently followed up and reports of follow-up activities were reviewed along with the participants' responses.

## **iii. Development context**

The Republic of the Fiji Islands consists of 332 islands, of which 110 are inhabited. In 2009, the total population was 849,000, approximately 43% of people living in urban areas. The capital, Suva, is on the larger of the two main islands, Viti Levu.

Fiji has a President who is nominated by the Great Council of Chiefs, traditional leaders who advise the President on matters related to the welfare of indigenous Fijians. The President appoints the Prime Minister who is the head of government. Fiji's bicameral legislature was suspended following a military coup in December 2006. In April 2009, the Fiji Court of Appeal ruled that the coup had been illegal, and a constitutional crisis ensued. President Iloilo abrogated the constitution, removed all office holders including all judges and the Governor of the Central Bank, and reappointed coup leader Commodore 'Frank' Bainimarama as Prime Minister.



**Sign of the times: Outside Suva city council offices, the parking space which once said 'Lord Mayor' has been painted over with 'SA' (Special Administrator).**

Commonwealth Heads of Government agreed the suspension of Fiji from the Commonwealth of Nations when promised elections for 2009 did not take place. The military government subsequently replaced all elected local councillors with Special Administrators or CEOs reporting to the Minister for Local Government. The sacking of all the mayors

effectively put an end to the Fiji Local Government Association. This has been followed by a number of decrees and special measures curtailing the activities of political parties, outlawing trade unions and imposing rigorous censorship on the media.

Fiji has four administrative regions -- central, eastern, western and northern -- and these are divided into local councils: two city councils, 10 town councils, 14 provincial councils and Rotuma island council. Council management (public service) is responsible for finance, health and market, town planning and sub-division of land, and infrastructure and works. While the Special Administrators and CEOs are predominantly male, women are represented in most of the council management sections, including town planning and engineering. Despite this, local government remains highly gendered, and a number of women have been fired in recent years by Administrators/CEOs when they have been deemed too outspoken or 'active'.

Although there are a number of initiatives focusing on governance in the Pacific region (Australian and New Zealand Government-sponsored, UNWOMEN), Fiji is often excluded from these because they focus on electoral processes and national political representation. Similarly, Fiji is frequently absent from Pacific regional data collections and research, especially because the CLGF – the major focal point for governance and leadership actions and analysis -- is no longer officially able to function in Fiji.

Fiji is one of the more developed of the Pacific Island economies, thanks to its rich resources (forest, minerals, fish, gold, copper and offshore oil). However it continues to have a large subsistence sector. GDP has grown since the coup as a result of economic liberalization and a revitalized tourism industry. However trade and investment have stagnated as a result of the political situation. Culturally, Fiji remains a patriarchal society, where women are broadly perceived as the property of their fathers until they marry, and then of their husbands. They do not have access to customary title, chiefdom or noble systems (often entry points for political participation).

### III. Project strategy

#### *i. Project approach and strategy*

The aims of the revised project were not specifically stated in project documentation, beyond the general aim of strengthening the role of women in local government. However a series of concrete actions and outputs were envisaged:

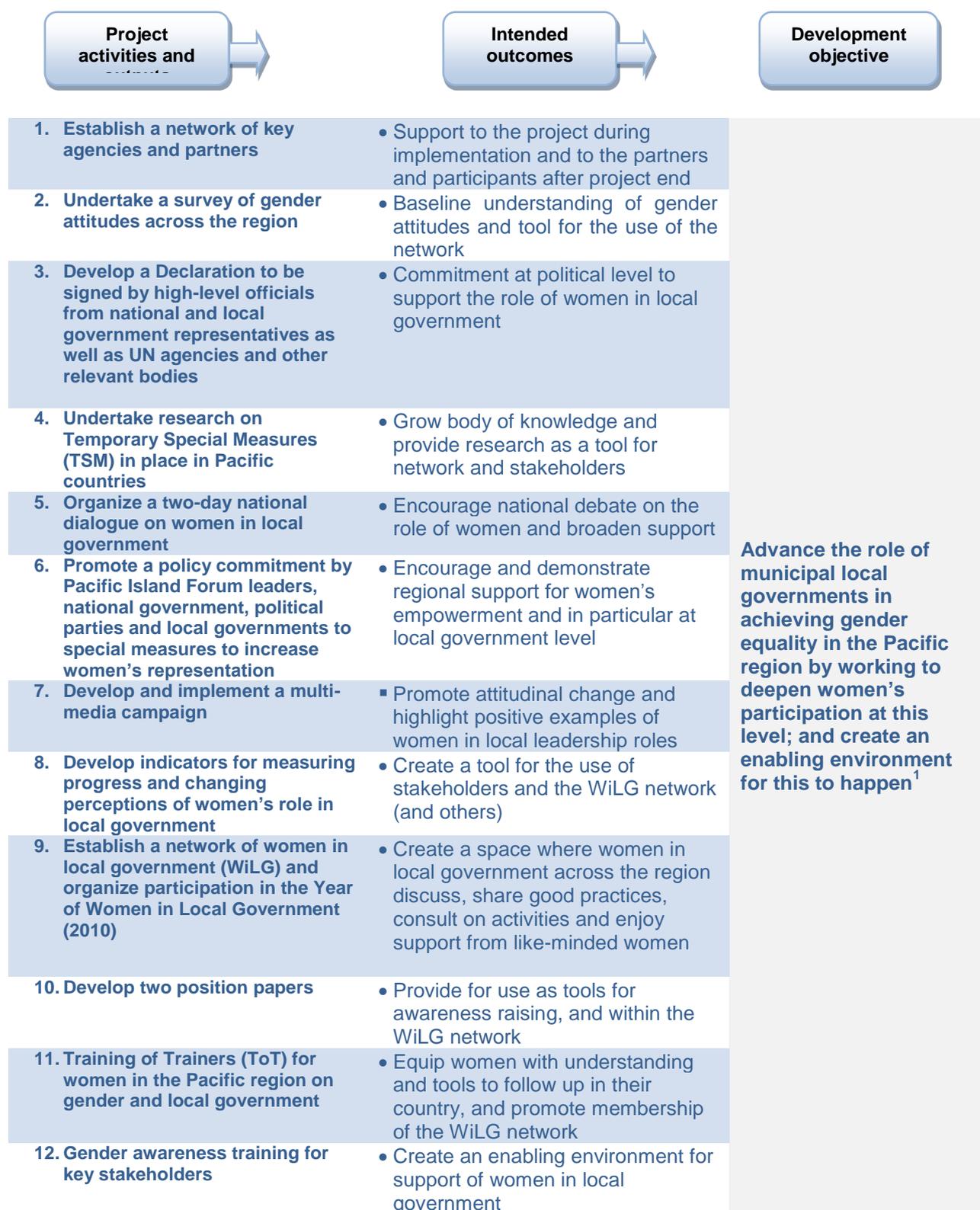
- i. Establish a network of key agencies and partners in support of strengthening women's participation in local government;
- ii. Undertake a survey of gender attitudes across the region;
- iii. Develop a Declaration to be signed by high-level officials from national (Fiji) and local government representatives as well as UN agencies and other relevant bodies;
- iv. Undertake research on Temporary Special Measures (TSM) in place in Pacific countries;
- v. Organize a two-day national dialogue on women in local government;
- vi. Promote a policy commitment by Pacific Island Forum leaders, national government, political parties and local governments to special measures to increase women's representation;
- vii. Develop and implement a multi-media campaign to promote attitudinal change and highlight positive examples of women in local leadership roles;
- viii. Develop indicators for measuring progress and changing perceptions of women's role in local government;
- ix. Establish a network of women in local government (WiLG) and, in relation to this, organize participation in the Year of Women in Local Government (2010) to build national and local support for women in local government;
- x. Develop a number of position papers to use as tools for awareness raising, and within the WiLG network;
- xi. Run Training of Trainers (ToT) for women in the Pacific region on gender and local government, engage these women in the WiLG network and monitor roll-out by these women across the region;
- xii. Run gender awareness training for key stakeholders (male and female) in support of the role of women in local government.

The links of these outputs to the general aim of strengthening the participation of women in local government are illustrated in the logical framework below.

The revised project was implemented as planned, with the grantee, IWDA, providing oversight and reporting to UNDEF, as well as gender expertise through a nominated project manager. She travelled to Fiji to attend training and for consultations, worked with CLGF on the production of materials and provided input to all aspects of the project.

The implementing partner, CLGF, developed and coordinated the stakeholder advisory group, arranged training and liaised with consultants taken on for both the training and, in due course, to coordinate the WiLG network. CLGF also liaised with in-country partners and contributed its expertise in local government as well as links into local government across the Pacific Islands. Partner relationships, outputs and completion/non-completion of tasks are outlined in the next section.

## ii. Logical framework



## IV. Evaluation findings

<sup>1</sup> Please note: This development objective is extrapolated from the original aims of the project and actual implementation.

## *i. Relevance*

### ▪ ***Project redesign and shift of focus***

The redesign of the project raised a number of questions, in particular why the decision was taken to extend a national Fiji project to the Pacific region; why the project would no longer work with elected councillors (or, following the closing of local councils, with potential future councillors) through gender sensitization of the major political parties; and why the stated intention to include men in the activities, in order to promote their understanding of gender equity and thus encourage attitudinal change, was not actively followed through.

These questions were raised with IWDA and CLGF in the course of broad discussions about the design of the project and implementation. Both IWDA and CLGF confirmed that the decision to move from a Fiji project to a regional initiative arose because CLGF was directed by its secretariat in the UK to disengage in Fiji following the country's suspension from the Commonwealth. Since it was committed to the project, CLGF proposed that the project become regional, which would allow it to continue its commitment, and that Fiji national participants might then be included in regional activities.

This is what happened: women from Fiji were included in the regional ToT; research included both regional studies and national studies commissioned from Fiji researchers; and the Women in Local Government (WiLG) network was set up as a regional network including women from Fiji. CLGF worked with a number of national Fiji women's organizations (Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM), femLINK and CLGF staff and identified consultants took the role of 'advisors' (although in practice CLGF maintained an important presence). The grantee, IWDA, explained that it did not consider finding an alternative organization as the main implementing partner in Fiji because there was no organization that had equivalent knowledge of or access to local government.

The two main partners also explained that it became impossible to work with political parties and both past and potential future elected representatives because of the political climate in Fiji and in particular the frequent issuing of decrees curtailing the activities of the parties, of trade unions and the media (although one former counsellor did work with the project as a consultant on both the training and the network). In a highly charged, sensitive political climate, the decision was taken to work instead with administrative and management levels of local government. Additionally, public servants at this level were considered to be closer to the communities in which they are located and directly involved in decisions affecting service delivery. Raising gender awareness at this level seemed to promise greater outcomes at community level while at the same time empowering women's role in local government by promoting better community understanding of the crucial service delivery functions that local government carries out.

IWDA believes that the redesign, moving from the political sector to civil society space, provided a better entry point for change. Both IWDA and CLGF confirmed that there had been no risk assessment and management plan at the project design stage.

### ▪ ***Organizational challenges***

The CLGF explained that working with women in management and administrative levels of local government brought considerable challenges because, although initially the Special Administrators and CEOs posed no obstacles to public servants participating in project activities, as time went by rumours began to spread that the women were being 'primed' to threaten the Administrators' and CEOs' positions. This coincided with the sacking of a number of high-profile female public servants for spurious reasons, such that the women involved in the project came to fear for their jobs. The partners explained that it was the

nature of the WiLG network and the support it provided that allowed most of the women to remain involved, as well as the identification of a number of male ‘champions’, including among the Special Administrators/CEOs, who demonstrated support. A consultant working with the project, herself a former councillor, was also instrumental in lobbying the Administrators/CEOs individually and reassuring them that the project’s activities were transparent and inclusive. In time, therefore, the fear subsided and women were again allowed to participate in the project.

- ***Involvement of men***

However, the climate of fear also restricted the number of men who participated, although men were not excluded where they came forward. The ToT in gender issues, for example, had 30 participants -- 25 women and five men. Male respondents were also surveyed for the gender attitudes survey, and the Special Administrators and CEOs, almost all of whom were male, were invited to participate in a basic two-day gender awareness training. Of the 30 participants in that training, only four were women. CLGF also explained efforts made to identify male ‘champions’, for example the CEO of Nadi council who offered to support the WiLG secretariat, and the Special Administrator of Suva council who gave his support. Follow-up briefings and training sessions run by the ToT participants have additionally included men and, in other countries of the region, some of the focal points for the ToT are male.

- ***CLGF and gender issues***

CLGF explained that the project was particularly important to the organization because they had already identified a significant gap in work in Fiji and indeed across the region, with no other organizations working with local government. UNIFEM (now UNWOMEN), for example, has had a Pacific regional project on women’s empowerment in governance since 2005, but this focuses entirely on participation in elections and high-level political processes. The coup d’état in Fiji and the suspension of elections meant that there was consequently no activity on women’s empowerment in governance at any level and Fiji is off the UNWOMEN gender empowerment programme’s radar all together.

Additionally, CLGF explained that they have strong experience in local government but have never mainstreamed gender; they consider that IWDA was a significant mentor in this respect.

CLGF advised that they were not involved in the original design of the project until the draft was ready, when they were asked to comment. They felt the cause/effect analysis that IWDA used was too theoretical and led to a project being designed that was very complex in implementation. The project was “just too big”. This was one reason why some of the planned outputs were not completed and why CLGF had to top-up available funds from its general budget.



The WiLG network website home page

- ***Training and the network***

The network coordinator organized training specifically for Special Administrators and CEOs of the councils but they were also subject to the Ministerial decree. She found that, even when the decree was withdrawn, some of the women self-censored and were not so active. This was the major reason why the third training session prepared by FWRM could not go ahead.

The consultant was subsequently elected by the women to coordinate the WiLG network and continues to do that. There are focal points in each council who advise her of upcoming events, organize meetings and share information. The networking events were well attended

during project implementation, she said, and the website is active. She believes that women in local government “don’t have much to look forward to” and that the network is consequently empowering, giving them a platform to air their grievances, share solutions, and think outside the box. In Fiji, congregations of more than three people are currently questioned, and the website, the coordinator believes, is “an ideal platform for women to meet”.

- **Community outreach and engagement**

Outreach to the wider community, promoting gender equality and illustrating how communities can work with local government, was achieved through the multimedia campaign component of the project. For this, the partner was femLINK Pacific, a community-based media organization founded on the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 around women’s participation in peace building. FemLINK developed the media/communications strategy, looking at how best to use available media, including community radio, mainstream media and publications. FemLINK works in other ways with IWDA, with the Australian organization funding the participation of young women in ‘suitcase radio’ journalism (using portable recording desks to gather community-based stories).

For this project, femLINK developed a radio drama *The Market Report*, using interviews with real people in the market place to illustrate real-life issues and how local government works. The development of the drama was consultative, including dialogue with the WiLG network members and femLINK volunteers. The organization provided training to young women in radio skills and in the issues to be covered, before working with them to produce the drama. CLGF also took on a short-term member of staff to cooperate with femLINK. She was responsible for media monitoring (mainly newspapers) on women’s participation in local government, violence against women and discrimination across the region. FemLINK provided the methodology and the articles were also used as part of the training. One observation from the media monitoring was that the now largely censored media are “scrambling to find stories”, often resorting to cutting a single story into sections and placing it as several articles in the newspaper.

The multimedia component also included the production of digital stories to be posted on websites (drawn from the *Stories of inspiration* publication) and pieces to be used by mainstream media. An ad for the network was placed in *The Fiji Times*. A volunteer graphic artist attended a network meeting in Nadi, Fiji, and produced the artwork which was also to be used to produce a poster, however this did not happen, perhaps because the usefulness of a poster was questioned.

FemLINK is still distributing the materials across the region and rebroadcasting them, renewing their relevance by juxtaposing them with local government updates.

- **Partnerships and cooperation**

Apart from the ‘development partners’ (equivalent to the proposed Reference Group), the project worked with a number of key consultants who were able to facilitate access to local government staff, lobby at political level and provide general advice.

Collaboration with the two UN agencies who might have been logical partners was mixed: CLGF works with UNDP’s Governance Team at global level and is developing plans to work with UNDP at the level of women in local government in the Pacific region. In this project, cooperation was largely limited to information sharing, given the limits on CLGF’s direct engagement in Fiji and UNDP’s country priorities in the area of crisis prevention and recovery. UNDP advised that the agency is now looking at the possibility of working with women at local government level and is interested in the outcomes of this project. UNDP did say that their work in Fiji with the government on social issues had been positive and that the Commonwealth’s stance was not productive.

The relationship of the project with UNWOMEN (UNIFEM at the time of project implementation) was classified by CLGF as ‘challenging’. Despite initial consultations on collaboration, UNWOMEN did not attend scheduled meetings, advised that it did not have resources to provide promised trainers (although one of the consultant trainers does also work as a UNWOMEN core trainer), and did not provide requested access to the UNWOMEN library.

UNWOMEN explained that they had concerns about the project from the outset and were reluctant to become involved. Their main concerns related to the fact that the grantee was an Australian organization, not a Pacific-based organization, and that CLGF did not have gender expertise. UNWOMEN was concerned that it might be pulled into implementing the project. UNWOMEN also does not currently work at local government level (its regional gender and governance programme focuses on electoral processes) and, with limited resources, decided not to participate (CLGF was never informed of this). CLGF did, however, keep UNWOMEN advised of progress of the project and continued to issue invitations to events and activities.

## *ii. Effectiveness*

The project did not achieve all of its aims. A number of intended outputs were not completed (although they have not in all cases been abandoned; both CLGF and IWDA intend, for example, to plan further distribution of the research papers produced):

- The regional **research on Temporary Special Measures** (TSM) at the level of local government was completed but has not yet been published.
- **Indicators for measuring progress and changing perceptions** of women’s role in local government were developed based on GenderLinks and contextualized for the Pacific region, but have not yet been tested – they remain as a concept paper only;
- The proposed **toolkit to support gender-sensitive local government** policies and procedures was not produced but preliminary concepts were included in the ToT, and the item remains on IWDA/CLGF’s ‘to do’ list;
- Intended **internal evaluation** was not completed (although IWDA explained that they undertake an organization-wide audit of activities regularly and that this project will be included in the next evaluation and lessons-learned exercise);
- **The two-day national dialogue** did not go ahead; instead the dialogue became one of several WiLG events and resulted in the development of a Strategy and Action Plan for the network in each country;
- The proposed **Declaration on Women in Local Government** was not done because of the changed political situation in Fiji and CLGF’s inability to pursue this initiative with the Government of Fiji;
- The proposed **dialogue with media representatives** did not materialize because of the political climate and in particular the media decree that imposed broad censorship.

CLGF considers that the outputs/actions not completed were a result of the over-ambitious project design. This was exacerbated by the political climate in Fiji, which not only prompted re-design of the project but also meant that training sessions and network meetings had to be organized with due regard to a decree banning meetings of more than three people, so that permissions had to be sought and participants reassured.

Despite the challenging climate in which the project was implemented, however, most intended outputs were completed:

- The proposed **Reference Group** was constituted, although it was not given that name (CLGF prefers to consider the organizations involved as ‘development partners’). FWRM, Fiji Women’s Crisis Centre (FWCC), the Pacific Centre for Peace Building, femLINK Pacific, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UNDP all contributed in

- divers ways as partners to the project, either through specific actions or through discussion and sharing.
- The **Gender Attitudes Survey** was completed (although IWDA believes it has been superseded by political events). In the course of compiling the survey, CLGF developed two questionnaires that were sent to 37 ex-councillors (33 women, 4 men) and 109 local government councillors (38 women, 71 men). One-on-one interviews were conducted with nine female and two male former councillors, and with 20 senior managers in local government, of whom five were men. Two focus groups of women who became members of the network were also organized.
  - **Research on Temporary Special Measures (TSM) across the region**, *Gender and local government in the Pacific Region: Special measures, a comparative regional study* was undertaken and is now in final draft form. It will be used as part of planned follow-up
  - A **short publication**, *Women in local government: Stories of inspiration from Fiji*, was produced and formed the basis of discussion at the network meetings;
  - **Two position papers** were prepared and distributed to participants: *Where are the women?* and *Local government: Servicing whom?* These were used to facilitate discussion in the network and were posted to the website. A **third paper**: *Measuring change* was also produced when the planned indicators were not ready by the end of the project.
  - A **training manual** for the ToT: *Pacific Gender in Local Government Training Handbook* was developed;
  - A **multimedia campaign** was developed and implemented. It included a radio drama *The Market Place*, digital stories, articles in the newsletters of femLINK, an advertisement in *The Fiji Times* on the WiLG network and a draft poster (this latter not printed).
  - A **website** presence called *Space on the Mat*: [www.wilgpacific.org](http://www.wilgpacific.org) was created to facilitate the work of the WiLG.

Intended actions were also substantially completed:

- A **commitment from Pacific Island Forum leaders** to include local government in their work on gender was achieved, in collaboration with UNDP.
- The **WiLG network** was established and equipped through ToT, materials and ongoing support – there are currently approximately 60 members in Fiji; the regional component is under-developed at this time with some 30 members spread across the Pacific Islands;
- Eight **WiLG networking events** were organized between December 2009 and October 2010;
- Four members of the WiLG network attended a **Year of Women in Local Government (2010) event** in Adelaide, Australia;
- A **WiLG dialogue** was held in Fiji in cooperation with the Pacific Centre for Peace Building. At this meeting the network members elected their office bearers, drafted a constitution and, in a World Café dialogue with regional members of the network, prepared national strategic plans for the network.
- **Two training sessions on gender, leadership and rights** were run in Fiji, developed by the FWRM as a project partner, with a total of 40 participants. A third session was prepared but was not run; the 30 women who would have participated in that completed pre-testing and assessment by questionnaire.
- **Training of Trainers (ToT) was delivered** to 25 women from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Questioned why participation in the Year of Women in Local Government (Australian national initiative, 2010) was included in activities, given that time was limited, IWDA explained that this provided an opportunity for four of the women from the WiLG network to travel to Adelaide and participate in broader networking. Their attendance also led to a mentoring

system being established between the WiLG members and local council women from Australia. Additionally, the Australian Local Government Association is a regular partner of CLGF and regularly does relevant research, so this was an opportunity for learning for the network.

### **iii. Efficiency**

#### **▪ Delay in start-up and costs**

Through 2008, some activities were undertaken, including important preparatory actions to develop the regional project and 'prime' potential participants and the care-takers who would allow access to them. CLGF was able to do this with funds from its general budget (AusAID supported); IWDA's time was unpaid.

Moving to a regional project involved considerable extra costs, which CLGF and IWDA covered out of their regular budgets. Additionally, the support needed for the network was underestimated. Exchange rate fluctuations (the government devalued the Fiji dollar by approximately 20 per cent during the life of the project, making transfers from Australia stronger but prices in Fiji much higher), in particular once the project became regional, also contributed to a budget shortfall.

As a result, CLGF spent about FJD30,000 from its general funds. Additionally, CLGF did not charge any salaries to the project. These extra costs were justified by CLGF because the organization moved to integrate the results of the project, and follow-up of these, into its ongoing work and so saw the costs incurred as an investment in future activities.

#### **▪ Working relationships**

Both IWDA and CLGF expressed satisfaction with their working relationship. IWDA recognized that it did not have the capacity, positioning nor country-level expertise to implement the project 'at ground level'. CLGF did not have gender expertise nor experience in project management. The partnership was therefore designed to use each of the partners' strengths. This is reflected in the budget, with IWDA allocating only the (partial) costs of a gender advisor/project liaison-manager and associated travel costs to the organization, with the majority of the funds being allocated to activities and outputs in-country. Despite CLGF's observation that one of the strongest outcomes of the project was the development of partnerships with local organizations in Fiji, the hoped-for links with UNWOMEN and in particular that organization's Gender Empowerment in the Pacific Region activities, were not achieved. There were difficulties in collaboration throughout the life of the project: CLGF was unaware of the reasons why UNWOMEN did not collaborate.

### **iv. Impact**

#### **▪ Laying foundations**

Considering the political space in which it had to operate, IWDA staff consider that the project was successful and has put in place processes and actions that will be sustainable, in particular the space and opportunity for future representation.

They believe that it is just the beginning of transformational change but that the foundations that have been built are significant, not only in Fiji but across the region.

The former IWDA Programme Manager believes that the project was important in placing gender issues on the local government regional agenda, and in identifying male and female advocates that could kick-start and support initiatives at a country level that will be supported through CLGF's ongoing regional programme.

At regional level, CLGF believes that gender issues and local government are now firmly on its own agenda and on the agenda of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat. In Fiji, the successful mobilization of a number of local partners around the role of women in local government – a new framework for women’s empowerment – has opened up new possibilities for cooperation and action.

▪ **The women**

From the women’s perspective, the women’s movement in Fiji has been substantially strengthened through links with CLGF. Before this project, local government was never seen as a place where women could develop politically. The fact that the Special Administrators/CEOs came to see the network as a potential threat attests to its success. The women interviewed from Suva and Lami city councils were extremely enthusiastic about the training they had received and the WiLG network. They explained that there is considerable pressure on them in the workplace and, although there is pay equity at each grade, in practice men are generally promoted before women with the same (or better) qualifications and experience and so move up the ladder faster, so that in practice men are better paid than women over the duration of their career. “Women are always second in line”, one woman said. The women also said that it was “easy to offend” in the workplace whenever they attempted to speak out.

The women from Suva council had been told they could no longer participate in the WiLG network and were further told they should not even look at the website. Since there are no longer any unions or business women’s groups, and for fear of their jobs, the women were complying with this directive. They had been told that this is a ministerial decision (this is in fact no longer the case). Although they thought that time management was not good in the training sessions they attended, the women were very positive about the contents and format. They described the discussions as “nourishing” and said they had felt more confident as a result of the training. In every case, they felt they had been given plenty of opportunities to speak out and noted that even women they knew who rarely spoke were able to voice their opinions. “Everyone wanted to speak”, one women said. “It was a lot of fun.”

“For a time, all the problems had a solution. We had hope for the future but then everything stopped. Now we don’t even email each other through fear.”  
**Training participant from Suva**

They were particularly enthusiastic about the regional nature of the training and network, and were encouraged to find that women across the Pacific shared the same kinds of problems in different ways and to different degrees. The women felt positive about what they see as generational change in Fiji, with all saying that younger men were more sensitive to women’s rights.

All of the women had taken what they had learned back to their workplaces and shared it with other women (and in some cases men). They had forwarded ideas to the WiLG network before their participation stopped and much appreciated the freedom to share experiences. They felt that their supervisors’ concerns were about the ‘local government’ aspect and that finding an alternative way to describe the network would help them to participate again. “Men are all about labels”, one woman said, “so change the name (of the network) so our bosses do not think about the local government aspect”.

The women interviewed described their reaction to not being allowed to participate in the WiLG network as “an end to our hopes and enthusiasm” and hoped that they would be able to find a way to continue the journey they had begun. They had become more vocal in the workplace, they said, although they numbered fewer than 50 in a total workforce of 471.

Women in other Pacific countries contacted by email also expressed enthusiasm for the training they had received and the network, in which most of them remain engaged. One

senior manager in local government in Papua New Guinea (PNG) said that she had considerable support from government because the initiative had come from a “proper, mandated institution” (CLGF). Often, she said, she had been invited to participate in “loose programmes that do not fit where they are intended and are seen as *ad hoc*, so not taken seriously”. The WiLG initiative, she said, complemented existing initiatives and “sits comfortably in our legal mandates”.

This was the first time many of the women had been invited to participate in gender training contextualized for local government employees. A participant from PNG believed that it was particularly relevant because in PNG “local government is the first tier of government and is closest to the people to provide basic services in the communities, very much affected by gender issues”.

Many of the women have been able to use the lessons learned during the training in their work, either through roll-outs of training in their workplaces or through discussions and briefings. A WiLG member from the Cook Islands has initiated a series of training sessions across the islands following her participation in the ToT. She and her colleagues from the Ministry of Internal Affairs have organized public meetings to discuss gender equality in island governance structures, and have held dialogues with ministry and local government leaders and workers. Both men and women have been involved in all the activities. CLGF is supporting many of these actions through its general funds.

A WiLG member from Sigatoka local council in Fiji organized a briefing on gender equality in a council meeting. An interesting outcome of this was the changing of titles in the council, for example from ‘Market Master’ to ‘Market Manager’. This same woman regularly now introduces gender issues in staff meetings. Another woman, from Rakiraki town council in Fiji, introduced gender issues into the induction sessions for new council staff and has so far organized five briefings.

In Kiribati, a senior manager advised that her participation in the ToT had had an immediate impact on her work, which includes her responsibility in recruiting new staff. “Instead of sending male employees to work with the outer islands (Island Councils) as clerks, female employees are also sent now,” she wrote. She explained that she is working to “slowly change the mindsets that not only males can work with the community in decision making”. Her gender-sensitive recruitment policy has been extended to the positions of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, “even if we know the job involves a lot of travelling within the islands from village to village. Females too, can do this”.

Taputu Mariri, a network member in the Cook Islands, used what she had learned in the ToT workshop to bring together a team of colleagues to raise awareness in island communities of the importance of gender equality in the islands’ governance structures. Public meetings, capacity building for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and one-on-one meetings with female executive members of councils and government community officers – these activities were carried out in all the islands except the two that are accessible only by sea.

In each public meeting, the team explained the characteristics of good governance, putting the discussion into the context of the Cook Islands, and gave the people present examples from history of the participation of women in Parliament and Island Councils, using this as a handle on which to ask, “Why are the numbers of women participating today negligible?”

Participants are led through exercises focusing on the differences when women are involved in decision making, ending in renewed emphasis on developing an environment in which young women particularly can advance to leadership positions in island councils.

These follow-up activities are being

This same woman had taken the opportunity to talk informally to the mayors en route to a national summit on climate change and had subsequently worked with a colleague and the Director of Local Government to develop a proposal for further gender training in Kiribati. This was funded by the CLGF, who also provided the services of a trainer who had been involved in the project. She concluded, “The workshop on Gender in Local Government is of paramount importance and must be rolled out to our communities on each island council. Kiribati people believe in culture whereby men are the decision makers and women tend to be implementers. Recommendations from our participants and some elders with whom we have shared this important information is encouraging the roll-out so we can slowly change the mindsets of the community and influential leaders and in this case, high support to potential women would be rendered, first from their family, the community and the leaders. National Council election is next year and hopefully all islands would be covered by then”.

The consultant who went to Kiribati for this workshop is also ensuring roll-out of the training in Nadi, Fiji. She works regularly as a trainer with the Bridge Project, which is the methodology that UNWOMEN has adopted to provide training to women around elections. The consultant believes that women in local government are fertile ground for gender training. “They are more educated than most of the women working in NGOs and at community level,” she said, “and where language is an issue, their English is better”.

This consultant has also rolled out the training module with three groups of Parliamentarians in the region and believes that the context-specific adaptation of the training module is key to its usefulness in the region. She remains convinced that the issue of gender is a vital element of effective service delivery at local government level and that more work needs to be done to mainstream it. “Pacific populations are predominantly female,” she said, “but it is not enough that the women are included, they need to participate and be trained so that their voices are heard”. This consultant believes, also, that men must be trained since gender-sensitive service delivery benefits both men and women. In the Kiribati follow-up, for example, she identified some men to be facilitators for the training and believes this helps to encourage other men to take up the training.



**The team: Junior Tangata, Vaine Wichman, Taputu Mariri (network member), Poroa Arokapiti**

FWRM, who facilitated the gender awareness training in Fiji, said that feedback from the participants was positive, that the women were interested in the issues and wanted more. The training covered ‘gender in action’, including labour rights, women’s rights especially in relation to violence, the importance of women participating in public life, leadership and discrimination. The training included case study work, with the participants encouraged to provide their own stories, and exercises directly addressing the application of the training to the women’s own situations. On a practical level, the training also included public speaking skills and dealing with the media. FWRM remains committed to implementing the third training session when possible and is talking to CLGF about how this might be done and what future potential for cooperation there may be.

Most of the women who have actively undertaken follow-up activities since the project ended are also active members of the WiLG network.

## **v. Sustainability**

All of the partners involved in this project in Fiji and across the region remain active and the two main outcomes of the project – the training and network – continue to motivate and mobilize women.

### **▪ Training**

Since the project ended, FWRM has followed up with two additional training sessions, in legal literacy and women's leadership. The FWCC has undertaken training in violence against women for the network's gender focal points. The training is also being modified and used in a number of different forums and settings by the women who are members of the WiLG network, although at this time not in Fiji. A number of the women have further trained colleagues – both women and men – to collaborate in training, multiplying the number of available trainers in the region.

### **▪ Network, website and communications**

The network is stable but is not yet growing. In Fiji, the self-censorship and climate of fear means that many women in local government do not actively participate in the network or even access the website. This is a challenge because, although support and promotion of the WiLG network is now written into CLGF's regional workplan, the organization cannot involve itself directly in Fiji. The website is a crucial tool for keeping the network mobilized and potentially for attracting more members. IWDA believes the web pages are a good space for sharing and CLGF has committed to supporting it through its regular budget. FemLINK Pacific has added 'women in local government' and information on the network and website into its regional workplan. It continues to broadcast the materials produced during the project, updating them regularly and encouraging young women trainees to develop new materials on the issue of women and local government.

### **▪ Regional support**

The inclusion of local government on the Pacific Islands Forum's agenda brings an additional dimension to ongoing work in this area, since it encourages members to engage at this formerly neglected level. As a result of CLGF sharing the project's objectives and outcomes through important regional mechanisms such as the Forum, AusAID's Pacific Leadership Programme has indicated that it will support project follow-up.

## **vi. UNDEF value-added**

Participants in the project believe that the project has created an important new framework for the promotion of gender in local government in the region and represents a breakthrough in emphasizing women's rights at this level. The grantee believes that the project opens doors for UNDEF to work in this area across the region.

The project clearly fits into UNDEF's mandate to focus on democratization, and is a significant contribution to a region where work in governance and gender is generally underfunded. Only the Australian and New Zealand Governments regularly provide funds in the region.

UNWOMEN expressed concerns that UNDEF had granted funding to an Australian organization, expressing the opinion that UN funds should go to local/regional organizations or be provided through UN agencies such as UNWOMEN (for example in the context of UNDAF gender strategies). UNWOMEN also said that it is important for UNDEF to prioritize funding for countries and regions that are not traditionally supported. UNWOMEN acknowledged that organizations in the Pacific may not be experienced in preparing funding submissions, and suggested that the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat might be able to facilitate that. FWRM advised, in confirmation of this, that they had prepared a number of funding submissions to the UN Trust Fund for Violence against Women, and to European

Commission funding lines, and has never been successful. Additionally, since many organizations in the region do not have easy Internet access, UNWOMEN believed that some way of alerting them to calls for submissions – perhaps through UN agencies or government channels – might be explored.

“This project was a breakthrough. For the first time, it brought gender and local government together. The broader actions of the project, in particular those involving local communities, clearly let people see that both women and local governments are a real resource.”

**Priscilla Singh, WiLG network coordinator and former local councillor**

## V. Conclusions

*i.* From the level of activity of CLGF and the involvement of Fiji participants in the project, ***it is clear that the redesigned project effectively solved the challenges that arose because of the changed political situation in Fiji*** and the inability of CLGF to engage in that country. [Note: This positive conclusion does not give rise to a recommendation in the next section.]

*ii.* ***Transforming the planned national project into a regional initiative resulted, additionally, in putting the issue of women in local government on the regional agendas of both CLGF and the Pacific Island forum***, embedding this issue in future action across the region. [Note: This positive conclusion does not give rise to a recommendation in the next section.]

*iii.* It is evident from the comments of CLGF and the non-completion of some activities that ***the project was over-ambitious and that closer consultation with the implementing partner at design stage might have pre-empted that***. No risk assessment and management plan was put in place at the design stage.

*iv.* There was consensus that ***the multimedia campaign was an effective component of the project***, building an important bridge of understanding between local government and the communities they serve (community support to women in local government is crucial at times of threat to women’s participation in such policy-making roles). The radio drama series and the inclusion of stories in publications were targeted at and reached broad public audiences however it is evident from the reluctance to proceed with producing the poster that was designed that it did not clearly present the issues around the role of women in local government nor effectively encourage women to join the network. Its target audience does not seem to have been specified and as a result of this and its confusing message, it is not a good example of communication.

*v.* Most of the women interviewed commented on how beneficial involvement in the network is; the women in Fiji who could no longer participate clearly regretted this. ***The network is well developed, well equipped*** (with ‘secondary’ outputs of the project such as the position papers and media materials) and effectively embedded. However, ***it needs now to grow in order to meet the challenge of turnover of members***, gradual loss of interest or commitment and reasonably shifts in women’s priorities.

*vi.* The case of the women in Suva and Lami councils who are no longer active in the network despite the lifting of restrictions on their involvement illustrates how **strong self-censorship can be, particularly in a sensitive political climate**. This is a potential threat across the Pacific given the volatile political regimes in some countries. **Means should be explored of facilitating the return of women who have dropped out of the network.**

*vii.* UNWOMEN's comment that the **Pacific region is under-funded**, with only two main donors active in the region, is a common one. Given the emphasis on governance by both AusAID and NZAID and the regional programmes of both UNWOMEN and UNDP in this area, there may be a **continuing role for UNDEF in this region.**

*viii.* UNWOMEN's advice – confirmed by NGOs – that most **NGOs in the Pacific are small and do not have expertise in project planning and funding submissions** is worth noting. Clearly it would be useful to **consider some form of process to support these organizations appropriately**. The European Commission's local office support practices are one example of how this might be achieved: EC in-country offices in some parts of the world help small national/local NGOs to develop submissions for various EC funding lines and often organize briefings when there are grant calls. While UNDEF does not have offices across all countries, this model might work through the regional commissions' offices, or through UNDP (and in fact could then include information on other funding lines, for example the Trust Funds on Violence against Women and on Human Trafficking). A second potential means of helping organizations to improve project planning and submissions might be to consider developing an on-line 'toolkit' in which organizations can find advice. The EC Daphne Programme, for example, has developed a 'Handy Hints' section on the Europa website to help organizations planning projects and preparing submissions. The Daphne Toolkit includes lessons-learned from evaluations of Daphne-supported projects.

*ix.* UNWOMEN's **concerns about funding going to an Australian organization for work offshore are not confirmed by this project**, where the partnership and budget allocation point to a clear division of roles according to each partner's strengths and where both partners believe they have benefited from the arrangement.

## VI. Recommendations

### *i.* For IWDA and CLGF

*i.* (Based on Conclusion iii): The experience of this project demonstrates that **it is vital to develop a risk assessment and a risk management plan for all projects at design stage**. In particular, when working in the Pacific Islands, always consider: (i) the potential for natural disaster (floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclones) and have a plan that allows a 'holding pattern' in such instances; (ii) political change, instability or hurdles; (iii) the inability of any of the partners to continue in the project; and (iv) restricted or no access to the intended participants.

*ii.* (Also based on Conclusion iii): Deriving from the view that the project was "just too big" and that some activities could not be completed within the time-frame or budget:

**consult with in-country partners at project design stage and conduct a stakeholder analysis to gauge the capacity of each partner to implement components of a project by deadline, within budget and according to their strengths.**

**iii.** (Also based on Conclusion iii): **Remain realistic at design stage. Focus on the essential components** of the project and strip away any that do not directly contribute to achieving the intended outcomes (in this project, for example, the research component might profitably have been cut back to the production of a series of position papers).

**ii. For CLGF**

**iv.** (Based on Conclusion iv): **Do not proceed with producing the poster in its current form. The message and target group are not clear and the timing is also now not optimal.**

**v.** (Based on Conclusions v and vi): The sustainability of the network will remain a challenge but **consider: (i) ongoing advocacy directly with Special Administrators and CEOs and at ministerial level** to promote the value of the network in service delivery and community support; (ii) **to address the problem of self-censorship among the women in Fiji** specifically, **ensure that they have up-to-date information on the status of ministerial obstacles** that were erected but have now been removed; (iii) to **address sensitivities among political and administrative leaders who fear that ‘women in local government’ may be lightly disguised political or union activism**, consider changing the name of the network and more especially the website (and URL). The name ‘Space on the Mat’ has already been used on the site and in materials and might be usable.

**iii. For UNDEF**

**vi.** Based on the particular interest of the Australian and New Zealand Governments in democratic governance and leadership in the Pacific region (Conclusion vii), **share this evaluation report with them** so that they might learn directly about the project and its outcomes.

**vii.** (Based on Conclusion iii): **Consider introducing a section in the application form for grants that requires all candidates** to outline steps they have taken to **assess risk** (political, financial, social, organizational) and how they will manage it.

**viii.** (Based on Conclusion viii): **Consider how support might be given to less developed organizations in less developed countries who may wish to develop projects and apply for funding.** This might, for example, be done through agreement with UNDP, UNOPS, other UN agencies in a given country or UN regional commissions, who could also ensure further dissemination of the calls for proposals (see concrete examples in Conclusion viii above).

**ix.** (Based on Conclusion ix): When UNDEF considers an arrangement where the grantee is not present in the country of project implementation (as in this project), it is **important to carefully consider how the grantee organization plans to implement the project, the respective roles of partners, and how the budget is constructed.** (UDF-RAP-07-170, for example, which also had an Australia-based grantee but project activity in

the Pacific Islands, did not succeed because of an imbalance in the roles allocated in Australia and in-country. This was indicated in the budget, which showed funds to be spent primarily in Australia, leaving the country partners under-resourced).

## **VII. Overall assessment and closing thoughts**

### ***i.* Accidental innovation**

Perhaps the most interesting thing about this project is that it was almost accidentally exceptional. The significant obstacles to a prompt start-up to the project (floods, political upheaval) that ultimately caused a significant redesign of the project led to the decision to target not elected council representatives, candidates and political parties, but to focus on women working at administrative and management levels in local government.

All of those who participated in the project agree that this targeting was innovative; in the opinion of some of those interviewed, it was groundbreaking.

It was this targeting and the demonstrated success of the initiative that led to local government (not only in relation to gender but also more broadly) being integrated into the workplan of the Pacific Islands Forum. Similarly, although it obviously works in the area of local government already, the project was instrumental in promoting the inclusion of gender issues in the workplan of CLGF Fiji and beyond.

### ***ii.* From project to ongoing action**

The project also achieved significant sustainability outcomes, putting in place the WiLG network that is supported across the Pacific region (even if it does still need to be promoted more and grow), developing, through the ToT, the gender understanding and training skills of a group of women who have already become multipliers in their country. The website, position papers and multimedia products also have more life in them and are still being used. The stated interest of the Australian regional governance programme and UNDP's regional programme based in Fiji are also important sustainability outcomes of this project.

### ***iii.* Intelligent partnerships**

A third major strength of this project is the way partnerships were organized in such a way that each partner's strengths were used to advantage, while each partner also had the opportunity to learn from others. CLGF's penetration at local government level and regional outreach, IWDA's gender expertise, femLINK's media experience, the rights-based training capacity of FWRM and the specific advocacy and training skills of the consultants who joined the project were skilfully used to deliver a project that, despite its complexity, simply got done. Interestingly, the few outputs that were not completed (the research and indicators) do not fit comfortably into the experience of the partners but also do not seem to be essential to the project.

In conclusion, this was a highly successful, innovative project, achieving significant impact and promising sustainable outcomes.

## VIII. ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Evaluation questions

i.

#### General evaluation question categories

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</li> <li>▪ Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why?</li> <li>▪ Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent have the project's objectives been reached?</li> <li>▪ To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?</li> <li>▪ Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives?</li> <li>▪ What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?</li> </ul>
Efficiency	To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?</li> <li>▪ Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?</li> <li>▪ Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?</li> </ul>
Impact	To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address?</li> <li>▪ Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative?</li> <li>▪ To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization?</li> <li>▪ Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact?</li> <li>▪ Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?</li> </ul>
UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc).</li> <li>▪ Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Documents reviewed

### Background documents

*The Local Government System in Fiji Islands* (CLGF Country Profile series, London)  
*Women's Representation in Local Government in the Asia-Pacific: Status Report 2010* (UNDP, CLGF, UNIFEM and UCLG-ASPAC)  
CLGF Pacific Project overview document  
CLGF Pacific Project website ([www.pacific.clgf.org.uk](http://www.pacific.clgf.org.uk))  
UNIFEM Pacific Regional Office (now UNWOMEN) website: ([www.pacific.unifem.org](http://www.pacific.unifem.org)). Programme area 4: Advancing Gender Equality in Political Governance (GEPG)

### Project outputs

SWPMG Position paper 1: *Creating space on the mat: Where are the women?*  
SWPMG Position paper 2: *Creating space on the mat: Local Government – Servicing whom?*  
SWPMG Position paper 3: *Creating space on the mat: Measuring change*  
*Gender Attitudes Survey Report*  
*Gender and Local Government: A comparative regional study* (TSM study)  
*Women in Local Government: Stories of inspiration from Fiji*  
Programme press releases and communications materials  
*Gender in Local Government Training of Trainers Handbook*  
*SWPMG Media Monitoring report*  
Women in Local Government newspaper advertisement  
*femLINK Community Radio Times* Edition 1, 2011  
*femTALK 1325* Edition 4, 2010  
Women in Local Government Network website ([www.wilgpacific.org](http://www.wilgpacific.org))

### Project documentation

*Project document: UDF-RAP-07-171: Strengthening Women's Participation in Municipal Governance* (SWPMG), October 2008  
Final project document narrative report: UDF-RAP-07-171, June 2011  
Mid-term progress report, UDF-RAP-07-171, 1 December 2009  
IWDA Project revision summary, 20 April 2009  
Brief summary of key networking and training events, Dec 2009 – Dec 2010  
UNDEF Project extension request form, 26 May 2010  
SWPMG Revised workplan 2009 – 2010  
*Training narrative report*, Fiji Women's Rights Movement gender training, Suva, Feb 2011  
*Training narrative report*, Fiji Women's Rights Movement gender training, Lautoka, March 2011

## Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

Activity	Dates
Preparatory phase start	1 August 2011
Travel to/from Fiji	28 August 2011/4 September 2011
Effective mission dates	22 August + 29 August – 2 September 2011
Reporting	5 – 12 September 2011
<b>22 August, Melbourne, Australia</b>	
Emily Miller	Programme Manager, IWDA
Jo Hayter	Executive Officer, IWDA
Jo Crawford	IWDA Consultant, TSM research
<b>28 August</b>	
International evaluator travel Melbourne – Sydney - Nadi (Fiji)	
<b>29 August, Suva, Fiji</b>	
International evaluator travel Nadi – Suva (Fiji)	
Coordination meeting, international and national evaluators	
Megan Praeger	Project Officer, CLGF
Miriam Rees	Consultant Communications, CLGF
<b>30 August, Suva, Fiji</b>	
Priscilla Singh	Consultant, Coordinator WiLG network
Veena Singh Bryar	Coordinator regional programmes and policy, femLINKPacific
<b>31 August, Suva, Fiji</b>	
Public holiday called for Eid Al-Fitr International evaluator follows up e-mailed questionnaires	
<b>1 September, Suva, Fiji</b>	
Introductory briefing on evaluation process, Kaliti Mate	Human Resources Manager, Suva City Council
Focus group with five women participants in the training and network (names withheld by request)	Suva and Lami councils
Hamidan Bibi	Consultant trainer, Milestones Pacific
Rita Taphorn	Regional Programme Manager, Gender Equity in Political Governance Programme, UNWOMEN
<b>2 September, Suva, Fiji</b>	
Neomai Maravuakula	Human Rights Training Officer, Fiji Women's Rights Movement
Ernesto Bautista	Regional Governance Advisor and Team Leader, UNDP Pacific
Follow-up questions, Megan Praeger, Miriam Rees and Executive Director	Project personnel, CLGF
Debriefing, local expert Sairusi Tinavocu	
<b>4 September, Suva, Fiji</b>	
International expert travel Suva – Nadi (Fiji) Nadi - Melbourne	
<b>By email exchange and questionnaire</b>	
Claire Rowland	Former IWDA Project Manager
Ritite Tekiau	Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, Kiribati

Kalolaine Fifita	Secretary, Ma'a Fafine mo e Famili Inc, Tonga
Nirmala Pariachi	Executive Secretary, Sigatoka Town Council, Fiji
Taputai Mariri	National Administrator, National Council of Women, Cook Islands
Gevo Mabone	Assistant Director Programme Management, Dept. of Provincial and Local Government Affairs, Papua New Guinea
Seini Raiko	Interim Administrator, Rakiraki Town Council, Fiji
Aruna Chandra	Executive Secretary, Nadi Town Council, Fiji
Anne Toncan	Senior Health Promotion Officer, Honiara City Council, Solomon Islands

## Annex 4: Acronyms

AusAID	Australian International Development programme
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
FWCC	Fiji Women's Crisis Centre
FWRM	Fiji Women's Rights Movement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IWDA	International Women's Development Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NZAID	New Zealand Aid programme
PNG	Papua New Guinea
ToT	Training of Trainers
TSM	Temporary Special Measures
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (now UNWOMEN)
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WiLG	Women in Local Government (network)

## Annex 5: Questionnaire developed for Fiji evaluation (master version)

### Notes:

1. While this evaluation aims of course to assess the achievements and non-achievements of the project against its stated aims and in relation to UNDEF's desired objectives, it is also intended to be a learning exercise. Lessons on what works, what doesn't work, obstacles to success, unanticipated positives etc. will be useful for future planning and understanding. Please therefore be frank in your responses and feel free to provide examples that illustrate salient points.
2. The questions that follow are intended to be 'prompts' as much as questions. Feel free to go beyond the immediate answer to provide any further comments you feel are relevant. Look upon this questionnaire as a preliminary 'discussion'.

### Section 1: Relevance

**These questions are designed to help the evaluator to assess the relevance of the project in relation to the problem identified and to consider the appropriateness of the response proposed to both solution of the problem and the needs of the intended beneficiaries.**

1. What cause/effect analysis was undertaken in relation to the identified problem?
2. The project was re-designed in 2009 (with unchanged objective) – at that time, how were the revised activities decided on?
3. Did you undertake a risk assessment during the preliminary design of the project? How was this managed? In particular, how was the risk of political change assessed and mitigated, given Fiji's political climate?
4. Why was the decision taken to extend the revised project to other Pacific countries? Was a comparative analysis undertaken of the status of women in political life in the other countries?
5. Why did the designers of the revised project include participation in the Year of Women in Local Government (2010)? What was the intended outcome of this?
6. Please feel free to add any further comments you may have that relate to the relevance of the project.

### Section 2: Effectiveness

**These questions are designed to help the evaluator to assess whether the project, as implemented, was able to achieve its stated goals and objectives.**

1. The original Project Document emphasizes the need to involve men in project activity, if desired outcomes are to be achieved. How were men integrated into the revised planned activities and outputs?
2. The original Project Document also says that "it is clear that strengthening capacity and opportunity is not sufficient..." How was this lesson integrated into the revised plan?
3. The reasons given for the need to revise the project were: severe flooding in January 2009; the termination of local government councillors in January 2009; and the abrogation of the Fiji Constitution in April 2009, which limited the ability of the CGLF to work. Please explain what actions were begun through 2008 and what achievements and outputs were realized or under way by end-2008.
4. Please give further details about how the project was organized, in particular the roles that IWDA and the partner played.
5. How did UNIFEM participate in the project? What synergies were achieved between the project and UNIFEM's regional programme for advancing gender equality in political governance in the Pacific?
6. Was the Reference Group established? If not, why not?
7. Was the two-day national dialogue held? If not, why not? If yes, how many people participated?
8. How many people participated in some way:
  - Members of network of local and regional agencies;
  - Participants in the two research components (focus groups, questionnaire respondents, semi-structured interviews, workshops etc)
  - Training on gender awareness for local councils.

9. Please explain how the network was set up: how were potential members identified and contacted? Is the network still operational?
10. Who did the research on the status of women in local government? What methodology was used? Were the results published? To whom were they disseminated? How was the research used?
11. Why was the Declaration on women in local government in Fiji not completed?
12. Who did the research on recent experiences of Pacific countries with different electoral systems and approaches? What methodology was used? Were the results published? To whom were they disseminated? How was the research used?
13. Who designed the multimedia campaign to promote attitudinal change? What were the target audiences for this campaign? Which media were used? How were shifts in attitude measured and evaluated? Please provide materials available (logo, messages, media releases, posters, print materials, documentary).
14. Who developed the indicators for measuring “meaningful progress and changing perceptions of women’s role in local government”? Are these available?
15. What methodology was used for the gender awareness training for local councils? How were the trainers selected? How were the outcomes evaluated? Was feedback sought from the trainees? (Please provide the evaluation and feedback if these are available)
16. Who developed the gender-sensitive tools to support assessment, development and monitoring of gender-sensitive local government policies and procedures? How were these used? To whom were they distributed? Are they available?
17. The revised workplan mentions roll-out workshops by ToT participants with individual councils to adopt draft gender and local government strategic frameworks and action plans. How many of these took place? How many frameworks/plans were formulated? Please provide details.
18. Please feel free to add any further comments you may have that relate to the effectiveness of the project.

### **Efficiency**

**These questions are designed to help the evaluator to judge whether there was a reasonable relationship between the resources expended and the project impacts.**

1. Was the partnership appropriate? Do you see the potential for other partners to be involved in this work either while it was in course or if it continues?
2. From where were any supplementary funds obtained?
3. Were there any unforeseen costs?
4. Were these expenditures during 2008? If yes, please provide details.
5. In hindsight, could any of the resources have been used differently or the same outcomes achieved in more cost-effective ways?
6. Please feel free to add any further comments you may have that relate to the efficiency of the project.

### **Impact**

**This section is designed to help the evaluator assess the extent to which the project has put in place people, processes and procedures that support continued and improved gender equity (awareness, participation, representation) in Fiji and other Pacific countries.**

**It is recognized that change is difficult to assess in the short term, however it would be helpful to be able to move beyond quantitative outcomes in this section and attempt to document some qualitative outcomes. Any specific examples you can provide will be useful.**

1. What is your personal assessment of the overall impact of the project? Please explain.
2. Was an internal (or external) evaluation of project impact and outcomes undertaken at any point during or after the project? Please share this.
3. Please indicate what you believe will be the tangible outcomes of the project. Do you believe there will be any negative outcomes?
4. How is the network that was established working? How is it resourced?
5. What follow-up has there been to the policy commitment by Pacific Island Forum leaders, national governments, political parties and local governments on special measures to increase women’s representation?
6. Has the multimedia campaign been taken up (i) by other organizations, including media organizations in Fiji; (ii) in other Pacific countries? Please provide details.

7. Have the gender-sensitive tools developed been used (the project partners or others) to measure changes in gender-sensitive local government policies and procedures? What results were obtained?
8. Have any organizations/bodies (including CGLF and IWDA) used the training materials developed since the end of the project?
9. Please give any other insights you have into the impact of the project.

### **Sustainability**

**These questions aim to help the evaluator assess the extent to which the project, as designed and implemented, has created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards gender equity in Fiji and other Pacific countries.**

1. Did the project set up any indicators of sustainability? Please share these.
2. Have any of the project's outputs or outcomes been mainstreamed since the project ended?
3. Are IWDA or CGLF continuing any of the project activities? Or are there plans to do so?

### **UNDEF value-added**

1. To your knowledge, are there similar initiatives of this kind by other organizations in the country?
2. To what extent, if any, did UNDEF's support of the project contribute to its impact, for example by attracting more participants, giving credibility to the training, facilitating access etc.
3. Did UNDEF's support in any way make the project more difficult to implement (for example by complicating dialogue with the authorities in Fiji)?