



# WINS Impact Briefing

July 2020



*Cover image. Participants at the 2018 Fiji OFC Women's Nations Cup Sports Commentary Workshop.  
Image credit: Aaron Kearney, ABC*



*Suchitra interviews Newcastle Jets player, Cassidy Davis, for the 2018 Fiji OFC Women's Nations Cup Sports Commentary Mentoring Program. Image credit: Rob Virtue. ABC News*

## **Contents**

Introduction.....	1
Methodology.....	2
Evaluation findings – WINS impact.....	4
Evaluation findings – Challenges.....	5
Recommendations.....	6
Acknowledgements.....	7



*Papua New Guinea's Dinnierose has broadened her journalism skills through continuing mentorship opportunities with WINS. Image credit: Aaron Kearney, ABC*

## Introduction

Women in News and Sport (WINS) was launched in 2015-16. The overall goal of the program is to increase opportunities for women in sports journalism in the Indo-Pacific region. The WINS program was conceived and designed by ABC International Development (ABCID) and funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The program has delivered 15 activities in the Indo-Pacific region with over 100 women participants, who have produced more than 200 media stories or content pieces, over the last five years (2015-2020). The program has helped integrate and mainstream female voices in sports reporting across the region.

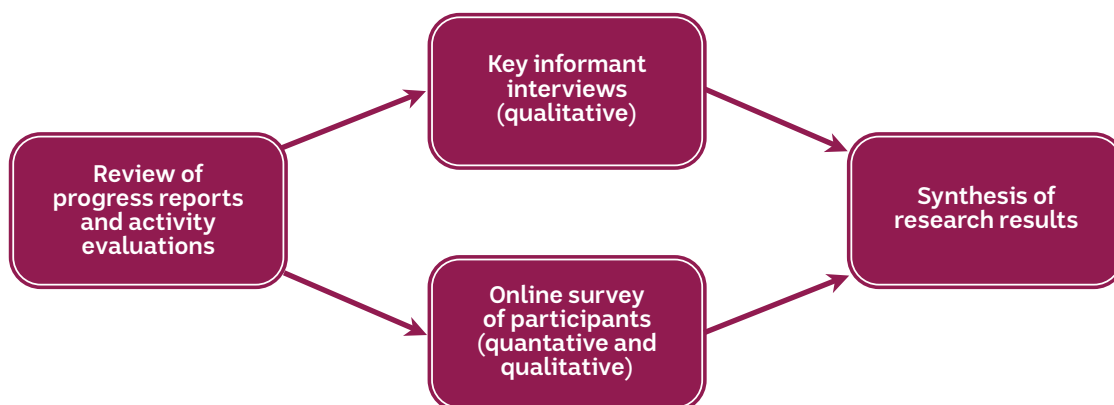
An evaluation for the program was completed in March 2020. The evaluation team included an independent consultant supported by ABCID research staff. This impact briefing is based on the detailed findings from the WINS evaluation, 2020. The evaluation illustrates WINS contribution to enhancing women's voice in decision making, leadership and peace building in line with the *Australian Government's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy, 2016*.



Participants at the 2017 Australian Open interviewing Hon. Greg Hunt MP (then Minister for Sport)  
Image credit: Joanna Lester

## Methodology

In 2019-20, the WINS evaluation was undertaken to evaluate the efficacy, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the project since its inception. The evaluation was designed using a convergent parallel mixed method design following a review of available reports and activity evaluations. The approach involved interviews with 15 participants, 3 supervisors and 5 DFAT staff conducted in parallel with an online survey of 47 participants. The surveys and interviews were conducted during January and February 2020. The report was delivered in March 2020.



## Achievements

WINS achievements and contribution towards gender equality in sports media in the Asia Pacific region.



**132 female participants**  
**15 training activities**  
**232 content pieces**

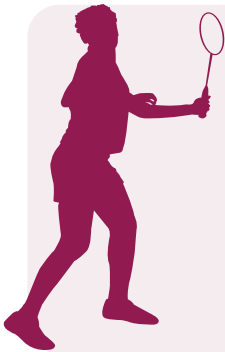
Three WINS alumni commented at the FIFA WWC in France in Pacific languages.



The “Pacific WINS” podcast series for the Pacific Games was a finalist at the New York Festivals Radio Awards in 2020.



**87%** agreed that there were **more stories in the media about women in sport than a few years ago.**



**57%** of respondents agree that **there are more jobs available for women in sports media than a few years ago.** A quarter (26%) were not sure.



“WINS is quite unique. It was good focusing on women’s issues. Women have their own particular issues that only women can understand. They can relate to each other’s problems and circumstances.”

“Attending the WINS training has given me confidence to take on sports reporting.”

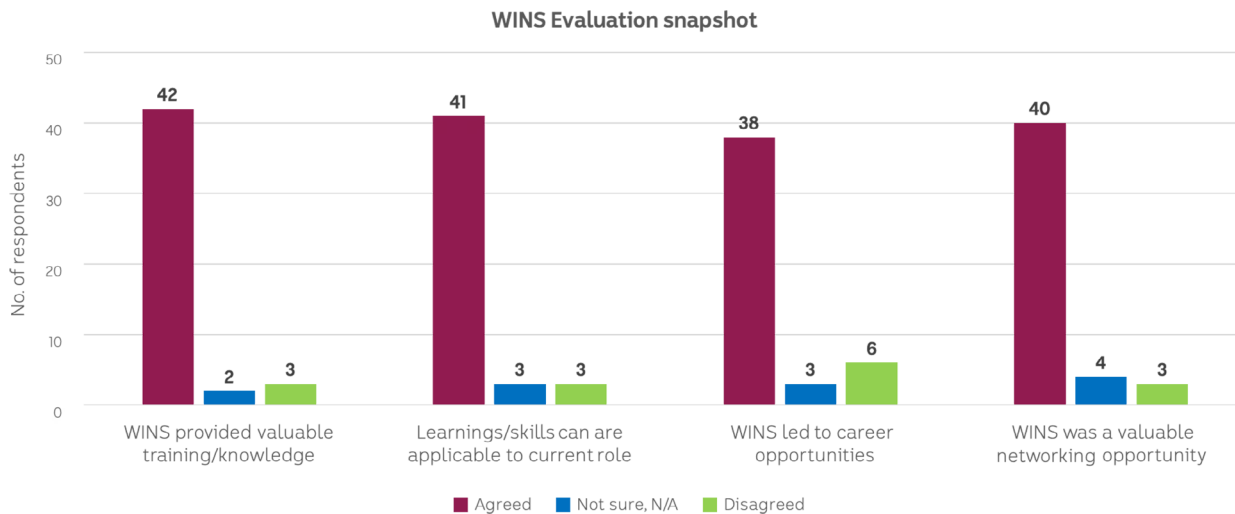
“The course was life changing. After 19 years of being a sports journalist people took me more seriously and I got more opportunities.”

“I get to network with other women in the industry and they have become great peers and mentors.”



## Evaluation findings – WINS impact

The evaluation covered the impact of WINS in three main areas. These are skills and knowledge, networking and career opportunities and confidence building.



### Skills and knowledge

- 89% of respondents confirmed that WINS training provided valuable skills and knowledge to help with their work.
- 87% of respondents agreed that they can apply the skills they learnt from the training in their jobs on most days.
- Half (51%) the respondents claimed that the main benefit of WINS training is gaining work-relevant skills. Respondents cited skills including interviewing, commentary, podcasting, and investigative journalism. 40% of participants stated that the greatest benefit for them was improving their knowledge.
- Learning or experiencing something new was mentioned by 17% of respondents. A third (33%) of older respondents mentioned this benefit.

### Networking and career opportunities

- 85% of respondents agreed that WINS training provided an important opportunity to network.
- 38% of respondents listed networking as a primary benefit of attending WINS training. Networking and support were most cited by young participants; 80% of those aged 18-24 listed it.
- Almost 1 in 5 (19%) respondents expressed that the motivation and inspiration that they drew from WINS participants and trainers was a primary benefit.
- 81% confirmed that WINS training helped them gain more career opportunities.

### Confidence

- Many (23%) respondents mentioned that the confidence they had gained as a result of attending the WINS training was the main benefit for them. Less experienced journalists were significantly more likely to report benefitting from gaining confidence.
- For several less experienced reporters, covering key sporting events as part of a live broadcasting environment proved to be career defining. These experiences contributed towards building confidence and served as a key motivation for them to pursue similar opportunities in future.

## Evaluation findings – Challenges for women in sports media

*“The main challenge for me personally in my country is the idea and mentality that sports reporting or commentary or anything to do with sports coverage is for men”*

The WINS participants disclosed a variety of challenges to women in sports media.

### 1. Underestimation and trivialisation

36% of survey respondents claimed this was a key challenge for women in sport media. They reported male colleagues, audiences, and sports people ignoring, dismissing, and excluding them.

Trivialisation was often expressed through the tasks assigned to women. For instance, in the Philippines and Indonesia participants were used as courtside reporters in men’s basketball, more for entertainment than journalism. Media organisations adopt this approach to provide entertainment through the interplay between male athletes and attractive female commentators.

### 2. Organisational preference for male reporters

34% survey respondents stated that one of the biggest challenges they faced was persistent preference for male sports reporters among organisational leadership. It is worth noting that the statements counted directly relate to systematic, industry-level issues.

Key informants stressed that more women than men do undergraduate training in journalism with one informant claiming that “At university there were 22 students in my class in journalism and only 3 men. But there is still more employment for men even if they don’t have the experience. Media organisations still prioritise men.” She noted that in her organisation unqualified men will be selected for positions above qualified women.

### 3. Lack of opportunity

34% survey respondents mentioned that women were not given opportunities in sports media. They referred to limited entry-level opportunities, being assigned minor stories to cover, very few commentary opportunities, and limited opportunities to advance.

### 4. Pervasive culture of sexism at a national/societal level.

30% of respondents claimed that they work within a society that holds men in higher regard than women. This is a key feature in most of the challenges cited, however for this insight only challenges that overtly referenced national/societal level of sexism were counted.

Many women journalists and commentators reported that they are often under a lot of scrutiny through social media. This can be demoralising and lower confidence. The women felt they needed the tools to be able to deal with this sort of feedback.

## Recommendations for supporting women in sports media

- **University visits** to encourage upcoming women journalists: Consider doing university visits to encourage emerging female journalists to take up sports journalism and discuss the required skills and support them to overcome challenges they will face early in their careers.
- **Training to cover key sporting events:** It is important to have workshops and training around sporting events and to participate actively in the events. It is important that women sports journalists are given the opportunity to be actively involved in key sporting events that can highlight their skills and capacity to report at such events.
- **Technical workshops:** Organise technical workshops for women in sports media to understand local sports terminology (e.g. basketball, cricket, football) and enhance their skills in sports journalism like commentary workshops.
- **Engage national/ local trainers** to ensure training considers the sports journalism context: The context for sports journalism may vary by country. There should be more local journalists presenting or facilitating to provide the local context and local networks. There could be co-teaching designs to bring in local experiences and challenges. Panel discussions with local journalists were highly valued.
- **Networking and advocacy:** Involve senior journalists who have been involved in sports journalism to act as mentors for participants. This should be encouraged by working with alumni and support networks. There are potential opportunities to regional networks for women in sports journalism in the Asia Pacific region to share their experiences and support each other.
- **Support for women in sports media:** It is important to engage more directly with counterpart governments, local sports industry and media organisations to build support for women in sports journalism.





Participants recording during the 2019 Arafura Games.  
Image credit: Shannon Byrne, ABC

## Acknowledgements

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