



PACIFIC MEDIA ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Gender

**IMPACT
ASSESSMENT
BRIEFING**

AUGUST 2015



PACMAS
Pacific Media Assistance Scheme

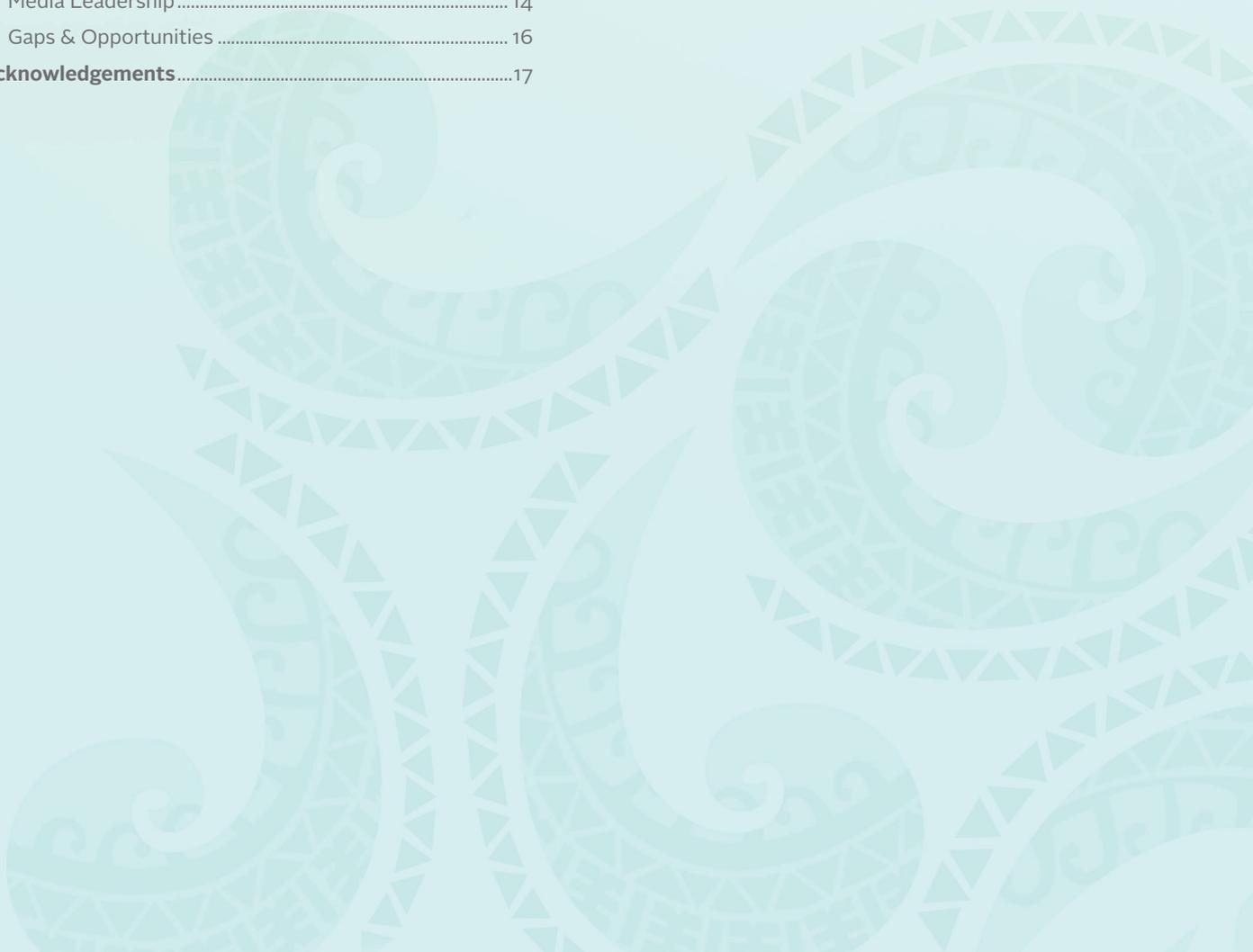


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BACKGROUND

The Pacific Media Assistance Program (PACMAS) is a 10-year (2008–2018) project, funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australian Aid, to support the development of media in the Pacific region. PACMAS aims to contribute to better governance in the Pacific region by supporting the development of diverse, independent and professional media that promotes informed and meaningful public discourse. It covers the 14 Pacific Island Forum member countries.

Now in phase two (November 2011 to June 2016), PACMAS is managed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation International Development (ABCID) and is based in Port Vila, Vanuatu. During this phase the project will implement seven *Strategic Activities*, in addition to four rounds of the *Innovation Fund* (IF). These activities contribute to PACMAS strategic areas, which have been identified in its design and reiterated in the 2013 Independent Review (DFAT, 2013). The project is seeking to understand targeted impact of its activities.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Media and communications initiatives are perfectly positioned to address inequities in the community by focusing on the representation of groups and increasing opportunities for people who may not have access to mainstream platforms to communicate their views and needs. PACMAS addresses key issues for the Pacific including gender, youth and disability. These cross-cutting areas are incorporated, where relevant, into the design and implementation of activities.



Photo by: Peter Drought ABC

PACMAS GENDER COMMITMENTS

Gender has been a key area of focus for PACMAS, which is consistent with priorities of the [Pacific region](#) and the [Australian Government's strategic focus](#). PACMAS has made a number of commitments to advancing gender equality in and through the Pacific media sector. These commitments were made in line with the [Beijing Platform for Action \(1995\)](#), Section J on Women in the Media. They include:

- **Advocating for leadership by women in the media.**
- **Partnerships to overcome gender stereotyping and degrading images of women in print, electronic, visual and audio communications.**
- **Balanced coverage of women's diverse lives and contributions to society.**
- **Empowerment of women with skills, knowledge and enabling access to appropriate and accessible Information and Communications Technology (ICTs).**

In 2013, PACMAS engaged FemLINKPACIFIC to develop recommendations to strengthen its approach to gender, with many of the recommendations taken up. According to these recommendations and commitments, gender has been addressed through PACMAS activities, project partnerships, operations and communications.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Photo: Vipul Khosla ABC

PACMAS ACTIVITIES – GENDER

PACMAS activities relating to gender or with gender outcomes are summarised below.

Gender & Capacity Building

PACMAS has undertaken media strengthening workshops across at least 14 different thematic and skill areas. Fifty-one per cent of all participants in these workshops have been women. To ensure equal participation in some technical workshops, female media practitioners have been targeted by the program and encouraged to apply. Many PACMAS trainings included gender sensitive components, which have resulted in targeted content production to meet the needs of female audiences. The new Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) curriculum Media and Communication teaching modules were audited by PACMAS for gender sensitivity. Components of gender sensitive teaching have been subsequently added.

Gender & Media Content

Video, radio, print and online content relating to gender and cross-cutting themes was produced through PACMAS activities. Themes addressed in the content produced include:

- Gender based violence (Samoa)
- Women, disability and social inclusion (Tonga)
- War widows (Bougainville)
- Gender based violence (Papua New Guinea)
- Climate change adaptation and gender (Vanuatu)
- Reproductive health (Vanuatu)
- Healthy relationships and youth (Samoa)
- 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women (Regional)
- Community Media and Political Representation (Regional)

Innovation & Gender

PACMAS supported local media, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to implement 18 small-scale innovative media and communications activities relating to gender. The activities promoted regional awareness of gender issues, increased the capacity of female media leaders and supported increased use of ICTs for women and youth.

Gender Research & Knowledge Production

PACMAS has partnered with regional organisations and academic institutions to contribute to research and knowledge about gender issues across the region. Numerous publications and online communications have been shared regionally through PACMAS.

PACMAS IMPACT – GENDER

The impact of PACMAS activities in relation to gender are summarised below

Capacity Building, Media Content & Gender

Capacity building has resulted in improvement in content quality and diversity. Female media professionals who received support from PACMAS returned to their organisation with new skills and took steps to pass on their skills within their organisations and the sector. The skills mentioned by respondents included writing, social media, camera work and editing, strategic management and negotiating skills, elections and budget reporting, media promotion of housing rights and strategic health communications.

Respondents were able to provide examples of how their new or improved skills had resulted in an increase in the quality and diversity of media content. Content examples illustrate the link between PACMAS activities and increased representation of marginalised voices including women, people with a disability, communities impacted upon by climate change and transgender communities.

Further, specific PACMAS training and support in the areas of elections reporting, budget and finance reporting and housing rights has resulted in the production of content in these areas addressing the needs of female audiences. Content produced about gender equality has promoted increased community discussion and awareness, particularly in Samoa.

Media Leadership & Gender

PACMAS has supported the development of women leaders in the media. Media leadership training has enabled female media practitioners to reflect on their own leadership qualities and implement change in their management and negotiating practices. Some are more likely to identify themselves as leaders after attending PACMAS training. Support has motivated and built the confidence of the next generation of female media leaders and has provided them with opportunities to learn new skills from being exposed to a range of experienced media practitioners.

Recent media sector entrants have used the training to further their careers, create representative content and to inspire other young people.

Gaps & Opportunities

According to most of the respondents, there have been improvements in the sector in terms of women's participation and work environment. Some also suggested there is now a greater focus on producing quality and diverse content that enhances community voice. However, there remains clear barriers and challenges to a more inclusive and representative media and communications sector.

Respondents suggested that a lack of training and opportunities, restrictive media environments, cultural norms, limited resources and low pay continue to prohibit full participation in the sector. Some identified gaps in programming and content production for women and youth in the areas of news, education and entertainment.



Photo: Peter Drought ABC

IMPACT

This report provides a summary of PACMAS work in relation to gender and analysis of its impact. The report contains two sections. The first provides an overview of PACMAS activities from a gender perspective. The purpose of this section is to provide an insight into the way that gender has been mainstreamed through PACMAS activities. The second section provides an analysis of the impact of some of these activities on people who received support.

METHODOLOGY

The overview of gender activities has been drawn from PACMAS monitoring and evaluation data, which has been collected across the phase. This data includes activity reports, participant profiles and project management information. The analysis of impact is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with nine recipients of PACMAS support. An ABC ID Research Officer conducted the interviews between May–July 2015.



PACMAS Tonga Elections Support to TBC. Photo: Peter Drought, ABC

SAMPLE

Respondents included women who are media leaders, emerging female media and communications professionals and male media advocates for change. Respondents were selected from a spread of countries, organisations and roles. The range of PACMAS support received by each respondent varied across the group, some had attended a number of trainings and workshops, covered regional events supported by PACMAS or attended single intensive trainings. One respondent had received a grant to support the production of media content. The respondents were from Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (PNG).

LIMITATIONS

Due to the number of locations, interviews were conducted remotely over the phone or using Skype. Although the quality of responses was high, connectivity issues and drop outs did occur at times.

The research involved a small number of respondents and is not intended to be a representative sample. The analysis does not aim to speak for women in the media sector. Rather, it is intended to highlight some targeted examples of the way that PACMAS activities have affected recipients and contributed to achieving the gender commitments made by the project.



Extracted from PACMAS supported University of Goroka film about gender issues in PNG

A. PACMAS ACTIVITIES GENDER

CAPACITY BUILDING

Building the capacity of the regions media and communications sector has been a core focus of PACMAS across all activities. Training and capacity building have been delivered in the following areas:

Participation

Women and men have participated equally in training and workshops. Fifty-one per cent of all (1129) workshop and training participants have been female. PACMAS has actively targeted qualified women to apply for activities to ensure that women are represented and have access to increased and relevant skills. For example, when low numbers of applications were received by women for some technical training, female practitioners and students were contacted with information about the training and their eligibility. This has resulted in better representation in some technical and leadership areas that may otherwise have had lower participation rates.





Fiji Women's Rights Movement acting executive director Michelle Reddy during a Q&A at the Budget Reporting Workshop. Photo: PACMAS

Gender Sensitivity

PACMAS requested trainers to include gender sensitive training components in their programs. An outcome of gender sensitive training can be seen through the Budget and Finance Reporting workshops conducted in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Tonga throughout 2015. The training included sessions on how to critically analyse the budget, its implications on all sections of the community and writing stories that enable the community to understand jargon and technical content. Providing relevant analysis for women audiences was a key area discussed during the training. CSOs and women's media outlets participated not only as recipients of budget and finance capacity building, but as valuable contributors to the discussion about how to tailor this information to different audience segments. As a result of the training, content has been produced in Fiji ([Fiji Times](#)) [exploring gender issues related to budget and finance](#).

CONTENT CREATION

PACMAS activities have focussed on improving the quality and diversity of locally produced media content. Radio and video content produced through PACMAS activities (both IF and Strategic Activities) have addressed the following cross-cutting themes relating to gender, most have been produced in local language and subtitled in English.

Gender Equality
SAMOA

Women, Disability and Social Inclusion
TONGA

War Widows
BOUGAINVILLE

Healthy Relationships and Youth
SAMOA

Climate Change Adaptation and Gender
VANUATU

Reproductive Health
VANUATU

Gender Based Violence
PNG

12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women
REGIONAL

Community Media and Political Representation
REGIONAL

INNOVATION

PACMAS ACTIVITIES - GENDER

PACMAS provided small grants to regional and local media, NGOs and CSOs to implement 18 activities that directly contributed to achieving the gender equality commitments made by the project. Seven of these activities were implemented with regional partners, with the remaining activities implemented with local organisations in Bougainville, Cook Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu.



Extracted from PACMAS supported University of Goroka film about gender issues in PNG

CASE STUDY 1

Partnering with Radio New Zealand to build the capacity of women leaders in the media

This activity provided the Tonga Broadcasting Commission's (TBC) general manager, Nanise Fifita, with the opportunity to complete a professional attachment within Radio New Zealand (RNZ). The project aimed to provide formal training and learning opportunities for newly appointed Pacific radio station leaders, so that they could more effectively lead their organisation and support the senior position holders within their organisations. As a result of the activity, Nanise Fifita gained valuable leadership training and experience from a reputable organisation, which helped her day-to-day operational

decision-making ability and her strategic planning and development. Nanise has also built relationships with the most senior level RNZ personnel including the CEO who provided future exchange, discussion, support and advice. The project helped Nanise to be able to lead and inspire her team, maximise potential amongst staff and concentrate on the generation of innovative and effective content for her radio station. Since participating in this leadership support, TBC, under the guidance of Nanise, has continued to work with PACMAS to build the level of capacity across the organisation. Particularly to cover national elections and produce strategic health communications.



Photo: Kilocutz Production House

CASE STUDY 2

Supporting small media organisations to empower women and youth with skills, knowledge and enabling access to appropriate and accessible ICTs

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This Kilocutz Production House activity in Niue aimed to provide an enabling environment for women and youth to utilise high definition capable mobile phones, tablets, low form factor cameras and other new technology to create, publish, promote online, or broadcast their views and concerns to the wider community. The project also aimed to enable women and youth to further maximise on the potential provided by the current rollout of fibre optics in Niue and allow media producers to realise the full potential offered by new media technologies. The activity has resulted in the increased use of less expensive new technologies to record community voices and has enabled more sectors of the community to be heard.

CASE STUDY 3

Regional partnerships to overcome gender stereotyping and degrading images of women in print, electronic, visual and audio communications

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The Innovation Fund has continued its key partnerships with regional organisations that promote inclusive communication including, FemLINKPACIFIC, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) and the World Association of Christian Communication (WACC). Working in partnership and individually, these organisations have expanded the reach and expertise of community radio in the Pacific to provide voice to communities underrepresented through mainstream media. Activities have promoted the use of

community radio to give women leaders a platform to communicate their political commitments and experience prior to elections. Among them, the organisations have developed online platforms, produced and distributed video content, led media coverage of regional events and facilitated the Global Media Monitoring Program (GMMP) for the Pacific. Individually, the organisations are critical to overcoming stereotyping and degrading images of women in the media. They continue to advocate for gender representative media and communications.

RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

PACMAS has invested in gender analysis and research that has raised awareness of the role of media and communications in sustaining or disrupting stereotypes in print, radio and screen content. This has involved providing support to Pacific partners to conduct media monitoring, producing research on gender and media, building online platforms to collate and showcase information about gender issues and conducting a gender audit of the new TVET Media and Communications modules.

Further information on these activities and outputs can be accessed below:



Woman in Vanuatu sharing her views about education. Photo: Vipul Khosla ABC

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION	ACCESS
State of Media and Communications in the Pacific – Gender	http://www.pacmas.org/profile/pacmas-state-of-media-and-communication-report-2013/
PACMAS website and blog – Gender	http://www.pacmas.org/subject/gender/
PACMAS Gender Research Report	http://www.pacmas.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/PACMAS-Gender-Research-Report_FemLINKPACIFIC.pdf
Global Media Monitoring Project (2015)	http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp
Gender audit of TVETs Pacific media and communications course modules	Access on request

A. PACMAS IMPACT GENDER

CAPACITY BUILDING & MEDIA CONTENT

PACMAS support has resulted in improved capacity of female media practitioners in a number of areas. Respondents identified technical skills and knowledge that they have implemented on return to their workplaces. These included writing, social media, camera work and editing, strategic management and negotiating skills, elections and budget reporting, media promotion of housing rights and strategic healthcommunications. The implementation of these skills has enabled respondents to produce content that better meets the needs of underrepresented communities.



SOLOMON ISLANDS JOURNALIST PRODUCES MORE CONTENT FOR WOMEN AUDIENCES

Lisa Horiwapu, Program Officer for Vois Blo Mere Solomons (Solomon Islands) has used her experience with PACMAS to produce straightforward, quality content for women in the Solomon Islands. Lisa was supported by PACMAS as part of the FemLINKPACIFIC media team to cover the 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women (2013). Participating in the coverage, she increased her ability to understand regional issues, and boosted her confidence to be able to translate what regional leaders were saying into stories for her audience; “*Women need to be able to understand the issues across the region...*”. Lisa recognised the importance of the role of community media to tell these stories:

“Radio programs are so important for women who have a high illiteracy rate in Solomon Islands.”

LISA HORIWAPU, 2015

Although many of the discussions between leaders at the Triennial were about complex issues, Lisa was able to simplify information to meet the needs of her audience. As she highlighted; “*... the simplicity of information provided can't compromise the quality of the information...*” (Lisa Horiwapu, 2015). Lisa's participation in this event increased the amount of content about these issues available to Solomon Islands women. Issues covered during the conference included education, economics, access to income generating activities, climate change and sexual and reproductive rights. Importantly, the content that she created gave women access to information and regional discussions that concerned their lives and livelihoods.

PACMAS supported FemLINKPACIFIC journalists including Lisa Horiwapu (left) to cover the 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women in 2013. Photo: PACMAS

As a result of PACMAS, Lisa also improved her ability to critically analyse federal budgets and present information about how the budget may affect her target audience – rural women. She attended the PACMAS Finance and Budget Reporting training held in Honiara in March 2015. She has since requested soft copies of Solomon Islands budget documents from government representatives to prepare budget briefings for her audience. PACMAS training diversified the type of information that Lisa can communicate to her audience.

Many respondents reported passing on skills and knowledge gained through PACMAS within their organisations. This occurred both formally as trainers for local journalism schools, and informally with colleagues.

RADIO STATION IN VANUATU BETTER EQUIPPED TO PROVIDE VOICE TO COMMUNITIES DURING ELECTIONS

Heather Maraki, Head of Radio News and Newspaper with FM107 (Vanuatu), attended numerous PACMAS trainings and after each, went back into the newsroom and presented on what she learned. According to Heather, this is vital for small media organisations like hers that have few resources for training. The PACMAS Elections Reporting Workshop in Honiara (2014) had the most significant impact on Heather's own skills and improved her organisations coverage of political issues. During the workshop, hearing from other participants was as valuable as learning from the trainers because the other participants faced similar barriers and challenges reporting on political issues within their own communities.

“The workshop was a great opportunity to come together with other Pacific Islanders to learn from each other and share experiences.”

HEATHER MARAKI, 2015

Before the PACMAS training, Heather would encourage her newsroom to report on “events” like announcing candidates and voting numbers, now she focuses on giving everyone, not just politicians, a platform on which to be heard. The training gave Heather an important insight into the role of media during this time. According to Heather, it is not just about giving politicians airspace “elections coverage can and will be about giving voice to the community to have their needs aired”. In the municipal elections (July 2014), FM107 was planning to seek inputs from youth, women and people with disabilities

to ensure that their voices were heard during the campaign. Preparing for the coverage, Heather and her colleagues planned to reflect on “*what do youth want, what women want, what do disabled want?*” rather than focussing only on what politicians have to say.

Most of the other respondents identified some improvement in the overall quality of media within their context. They have noticed an increase in the types of issues covered in media, along with access to locally produced content, and content produced by youth.

“I can honestly say that we are actually moving towards – getting all of the very important issues that need to be highlighted – out there.”

ROSEMARIE ELLIE BOTONG, 2015



Tonga Broadcasting Commissions (TBC) journalists covering the 2014 national election. Photo: Peter Drought ABC



Extract from PACMAS supported *Fallen Lizards* film on gender equality issues in Samoa

MEDIA CONTENT PROVIDES A PLATFORM FOR COMMUNITY DISCUSSION ABOUT CULTURAL VALUES AND GENDER EQUALITY IN SAMOA

PACMAS supported the production of a *Fallen Lizards* documentary in Samoan language about gender equality. The film was distributed across the region and internationally and has promoted discussion and debate. The documentary reflected on social and historical beliefs about gender roles in Samoa and encouraged audiences to reflect on the following sentiment:

“Popular discourse in Samoa refers to the sanctity and power of women in the society historically, however, if there is equality why is there so few women in the political sphere?”

GALUMALEMANA STEVEN PERCIVAL, 2015

Presenting these perspectives, the film generated vigorous local and international debate. According to the *Fallen Lizards* filmmaker, Galumalemana Steven Percival, this is precisely the role of good documentary film making – to voice issues in a way that brings to the surface opinions and values that challenge a community and stimulate debate. According to Steven, the film has benefited educators the most as it provides them with an avenue to open up sensitive discussions.

“At an audience level conversation needs to be generated and in classrooms... The film has generated important conversations in institutions, families and schools.”

GALUMALEMANA STEVEN PERCIVAL, 2015

According to Steve, after watching the film many people told him that it promoted discussion in their family or community. The film is an example of the way that PACMAS media content has opened up spaces for communities to start talking and debating gender issues.

ACTIVITIES EXPOSED MEDIA PRACTITIONERS TO UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS

PACMAS activities have created opportunities for media practitioners to be exposed to a number of community groups underrepresented in mainstream media. This increased media awareness of issues including gender and climate change, transgender communities, youth, and people living with disabilities. Some respondents highlighted the specific barriers facing these communities and the role that media can play in having their voices heard. Respondents have noticed an increase in media coverage of these issues since participating.

“We went to an informal settlement...not having access to basic needs and not have any space in mainstream media to have their voices heard.”

MARYANN LOCKINGTON, 2015

MEDIA LEADERSHIP

PACMAS has supported the development of current and future female leaders in the media. Activities have had an impact on respondent's management practices, their perception of themselves as leaders, and access to new professional networks.

FEMALE MEDIA PRACTITIONERS STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP SKILLS

PACMAS Strategic Media Leadership Training held in Vanuatu in 2015 was an opportunity for current and emerging leaders to come together from across the Pacific. A number of respondents who attended the course have started implementing their negotiating skills to assist junior staff and communicate strategic planning.

“That course really did transform me ... it did bring something out of me.”

MISA VICKY LEPOU, 2015

Building capacity and confidence of women media leaders is vital, particularly in contexts where women's presence as leaders in the sector is still being established, such as in PNG.

“The media sector in PNG is changing, it was tough, but it is slowly being acceptable to see women in leadership.”

ROSEMARIE ELLIE BOTONG, 2015

Some respondents were clear about their role as leaders before the training and felt that PACMAS support built on these foundations. However, for others the opportunity to participate was the first time to reflect on how they had evolved from juniors in the sector to become leaders. For one respondent, being nominated by her organisation to attend the PACMAS Strategic Media Leadership training was the first time that she had really thought of herself as a leader:

“I did not know that I was a leader ... it was nice to have that highlighted.”

ROSEMARIE ELLIE BOTONG, 2015

NEXT GENERATION OF WOMEN LEADERS BUILD MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

PACMAS has supported young women with local and international training and support that has assisted them to gain new skills, professional networks and motivation to continue to improve in their chosen fields.

Brianna Fruean, founder of Small Voices of Samoa – a recognised environmental activist and blogger – benefited from PACMAS training by gaining important writing skills, social media knowledge, and youth networks, which have sustained her until this day.

In 2012, Brianna attended the Rio 20+ UN Conservation Conference as part of a delegation of Pacific journalists. The experience was a “huge learning curve” because she was managing a heavy workload to submit stories and update her blog. She learned early on that “deadlines are deadlines – you have to submit a story on time.” She watched and learned from senior journalists who were also in the delegation and worked closely with the other youth journalists. They have remained a close network for Brianna that she uses to “float ideas with”, hear feedback and share innovations.

Brianna was also supported by PACMAS to expand her own environmental NGO within schools in Samoa. As she embarks on her final year in secondary school she is as inspired as ever to harness the power of social media for good. She is currently handing over the operations of her NGO to the next generation of young environmentalists, because she is aware of sustaining the organisation

once she leaves school to attend university. During this handover she is sharing the skills she has gained using ICTs and social media. Working with PACMAS, Brianna gained confidence to reassure parents and teachers unsure about the impacts of screen time on their children that “social media can be harnessed for good”. Her work demonstrates the sustainability of media capacity building for youth.



Brianna Fruean representing her NGO, Small Voices of Samoa. Photo: Talamua Media and Publications Samoa

Other young media practitioners have gone on to use their newly gained skills to produce media content about gender. A great example is Sian Rolls, from Fiji, who attended a 2014 PACMAS intensive training on camera work and editing at the ABC in Melbourne.

According to Sian, the training built her skills, provided her with new professional networks and most importantly, fed her personal desire to continue to learn about the craft and build her own skills using different editing software. After attending she decided to invest in her skills and did this by upgrading her camera to a “proper DSLR”. She is able to use it and be mindful of how to make the picture the best it can be using the environment that she is shooting in. She has been able to explore new things beyond the basics and if she has any questions she can contact the network of trainers and participants who she is still connected with on Facebook.



Sian Rolls (left) and Alisia Evens from FemLINKPACIFIC with HE Mary Robinson UN Special Envoy on Climate Change. Photo: FemLINKPACIFIC

After attending the training she was invited to create a short 10 minute documentary film for Youth Voices Count.¹ The film is about the recognition of transgendered people and is set in Suva's biggest drag show – which she was able to attend for the first time. The film has generated 1,227 views on YouTube alone. Importantly, it generated discussion, “people talk about it” and the issues that it has raised. Sian plans to stay in the media industry and is likely to continue her work giving voice to marginalised and under-represented communities, because, as she noted “people have stories to tell.” Since attending the PACMAS training, Sian rejoined FemLINKPACIFIC and has shared her skills with members of the “Young Women’s Leadership Team and within the core group of young women volunteer producers and broadcasters.” According to Sian, up-skilling within this feminist network of producers is important to ensure that content is produced that reflects the diverse role of women in their communities and as key stakeholders of development and peace building.

As the examples above highlight, PACMAS has supported female leaders to continue their work in the sector, while building the capacity of the next generation of young women coming into the industry. It is important to note that although many respondents spoke with optimism about the role of women as leaders and in the sector, many also highlighted clear gaps that must continue to be addressed.

GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

There remain clear opportunities to advocate for gender equality, promote opportunities for young women in media, increase local content and improve representation.

RESTRICTIVE MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS

Restrictive media environments discourage journalists to continue in the industry. Some entry level journalists have been put off pursuing a career in journalism because of restrictive media environments. One suggested that she would rather work in the NGO sector to have an impact on the lives of women and children because “...the media practices a lot of self-censorship...it is depressing as a young journalist wanting to go into that space because it is so restricted.” (Research Respondent, 2015)

GENDERED CULTURAL NORMS

Cultural norms and expectations remain a barrier for gender equality in the sector. This remains particularly salient for young women who experience being discriminated against for their gender and for their age. One respondent noted that this is most difficult when it comes to getting sources and conducting interviews.

“When you are a female (journalist) there is an underlying patriarchy. When you’re a young woman it is hard to get people to take you seriously.”

RESEARCH RESPONDENT, 2015

One respondent also suggested that PACMAS/ABCID could raise awareness about editorial considerations relating to gender and communication for social change content. This would ensure that truly diverse and critical content can be developed in a supportive space.

“You don’t judge what people say as a film maker ...that is not how to produce films that encourage people to question each other, to have conversations rather than be told how or what to think...”

RESEARCH RESPONDENT, 2015

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIbeaLYMjEg>

VARIED ORGANISATIONAL STANDARDS

There have been improvements in the sector in terms of women's participation, particularly in non-technical parts of the industry. According to one respondent, some organisations are better than others at promoting gender equality. However, most agreed that they continued to work in the space because they are passionate about media and communication and love their chosen careers.

“There are challenges. I mean we have evolved from when it was a woman's job to be in the kitchen...I think that I work for a great organisation that recognises the strengths of a leader. If you show that you can do it they will support you. I love being in the media sector.”
(Research Respondent, 2015)

In general, the sense from respondents is that the sector is changing for the better, but that there is still plenty of room for improvement. These comments were not just related to gender, but to the quality and diversity of media content generally.

The challenge for (Pacific) media is to produce local, high quality and relevant content, which entertains people and tells local stories... Currently the lack of presentation of Youth voices means that they are either not heard or they are stereotyped in the media. It is easier and more palatable to present stereotypes.”

RESEARCH RESPONDENT, 2015

Respondents suggested that improving pay, access to training and technical resources can help to address these issues and make the industry more attractive to tertiary graduates.

ENGAGING MALE ADVOCATES FOR CHANGE WITHIN MEDIA

Some suggested that now women are better represented within the industry, the challenge has become engaging male media practitioners and leaders to be responsive to the needs of female audience members and to be able deal with gender issues relevant to their communities and organisation.

“Gender is not only women's issues – we have challenges and we need to tackle issues together.”

RESEARCH RESPONDENT, 2015



Photo: Peter Drought, ABC

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For further information:

<http://www.pacmas.org/>

<http://www.abcinternationaldevelopment.net.au/contact-us>



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